INNER SPACE

RABBI ARYEH KAPLAN

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Introduction to Kabbalah, Meditation and Prophecy

by

Rabbi **Aryeh Kaplan** *z"l*

October 23, 1934 — January 28, 1983

Edited by

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This book contains Divine Names. Do not take it into the bathroom or any other unclean place.

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תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים

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Foreword

The first part of this book is based on a series of classes that Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan *z"l* gave to a small group of students at his home in Brooklyn, from August 10 to November 2, 1981. Thinking of eventually developing them into a book, Rabbi Kaplan had the classes taped and transcribed. Such being the origin of this book, the editor was reluctant to tamper with the sometimes colloquial style, for it brought vivid memories of the author discussing these profound concepts with the unique clarity and simplicity that characterized him. His frequent smile, the amusing comments with which he lightened a long and involved example, his unique use of *Mashal* (analogy) blending his scientific background with his profound knowledge of Torah, all bring to mind the attribute Kabbalists are generally known for: *Mesamchey Lev* (causing others to be happy of heart).

With the eventual publication of these transcripts in mind, Rabbi Kaplan made lists of all the ideas mentioned in each class, and included these summaries after the corresponding transcript. Needless to say, these lists were invaluable in editing the material for publication. In addition, Rabbi Kaplan's voluminous written works were consulted throughout the entire editing and annotating process.

Although this book is designed as an introductory course in Kabbalah, it includes only a brief survey of the main texts and personalities in the field, for Rabbi Kaplan's *Meditation and Kabbalah* (Weiser, 1982) covers his main research in this area. The title of this book is Rabbi Kaplan's own. As he bound the transcripts of the classes, he included an initial sheet with the title and subtitle he had selected.

Perhaps due to the aura of secrecy around it, Kabbalah has always been an appealing subject; there are many books printed on Kabbalah. The amount of misinformation printed under that title, however, is staggering. In view of this, Rabbi Kaplan was concerned to give an insider's view of how the hidden worlds relate to human experience, thus presenting a simple outline of the most complex structures, highlighted by his lucid explanations and examples. It is important to realize, however, that he only attempted to help his listeners understand the basic foundations of Kabbalah, without ever going into these difficult

concepts in depth. As he was discussing the structure of *Adam Kadmon*, he observed:

"As usual, these beautiful Kabbalistic concepts will appear to you very simple, until you look at the *Etz Chaim*, which covers about fifty pages discussing the structure and functions of *Adam Kadmon*. By the time you are finished, besides being totally dizzy, you realize that just as there is nothing simple in the visible world, to a much greater extent, there is nothing simple in the hidden world."

It is important to warn the reader that in order to describe certain Kabbalistic notions such as *Sefirot* or *Partzufim*, it is necessary to use metaphors to express abstract concepts, due to the limitations of human language. The reader should understand these descriptions as complex poetical symbols rather than focusing on the imagery as such.

The second part of this book is an independent series of lectures on the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel that were given from January 18 to March 15, 1982. In these lectures, Rabbi Kaplan developed the theme of meditation as it manifests itself in prophecy. In this sense, it is a sequel to his posthumous *Jewish Meditation* (Shocken, 1985). It seemed logical to join this section to the first part of this book rather than publish it as a separate volume because it would be useless to a beginner without the knowledge of the basic principles of Kabbalah expounded in the first part. In addition, they supplement the first part in that they translate Kabbalistic concepts into our everyday life. It is our hope that many readers will be inspired to return to the faith of their fathers as the mystical reasons behind the commandments are progressively unveiled to them and that this will be a source of benefit for the soul of our departed teacher, Amen.

As in any class, there was a problem of asides to deal with. Questions sometimes led Rabbi Kaplan in a different direction. Although he invariably came back to the point he started out discussing, the aside was often an important thought that would be lost if merely ignored. These asides were incorporated whenever they did not lead the discussion too far afield.

It was fortunate for the Jewish people that Rabbi Kaplan always had his classes taped. On January 4, 1982, he mentioned how important it was for rabbis to have their disciples preserve their oral teachings. Rabbi Kaplan followed a long tradition of Kabbalistic masters whose teachings were put into writing by their disciples. The editor of this volume has inserted paragraphs of transition for the purpose of readability. He hopes not to have misinterpreted the teachings of Rabbi Kaplan in the process.

Jerusalem 5750 (1990)

Part I

INTRODUCTION to KABBALAH

Chapter 1: KABBALAH and PROPHECY

What does the word Kabbalah mean? It stems from the root *Kabal*, meaning "to receive." The term implies that it is a certain kind of wisdom that is received.[1]

The *Mishnah* says that "Moses *kibel*-received Torah on Sinai and [subsequently] transmitted it to Joshua. Joshua transmitted it to the Elders. The Elders transmitted it to the Prophets. The Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly."[2]

Moses was the master of all prophets.[3] He understood the Torah completely.[4] In this sense his prophetic vision was on the level of an open vessel that could always receive more.[5] Perhaps the secret of Moses' receiving was, the more he transmitted, the more he was able to receive. The *Mishnah* thus says, "Moses *kibel* Torah" because he was the paradigm of complete and total *kabbalah*-receptivity to the prophetic experience.[6]

The idea of Kabbalah, then, is to become completely infused with Torah and to connect with it on every possible level.[7] Without Kabbalah, a person could understand Torah on a number of levels. The only way to grasp every single nuance of Torah, however, is through the prophetic wisdom that is contained in Kabbalah.[8]

We can now understand what Moses "transmitted to Joshua and Joshua transmitted to the Elders, etc." According to the Torah, God told Moses to place his spirit upon Joshua (Numbers 27:20). In other words, Moses was to invest Joshua with his own spirit of prophecy.[9] According to an ancient *Midrash*, this included the necessary methods and disciplines for acquiring prophecy.[10] Moses thus transmitted the keys for entering the prophetic state to Joshua. These keys constituted the Kabbalah tradition.

Throughout the period of the Prophets, the Kabbalah was guarded by the master prophets and transmitted to select disciples.[11] During this time, the Sanctuary, and later the First Temple, served as the focal point for all prophetic experience.[12] When the Temple was about to be destroyed the prophet Ezekiel was shown a vision which was to signal the end of a thousand year period of prophecy.[13] This vision is known as *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, the Discipline (or Workings) of the Chariot.[14] While referring specifically to the opening chapter of the book of Ezekiel, the

term *Ma'aseh Merkavah* is also a general appellation for the entire Kabbalah tradition.[15]

Unlike previous prophetic messages, Ezekiel's vision included an actual detailed description of the ascent of the prophet and the barriers he encountered before hearing God's voice. Coming at the close of the prophetic era, Ezekiel's vision had to contain explicit directions for attaining and entering the prophetic state. Nevertheless, these directions were couched in extremely obscure terms. For all intents and purposes, the Kabbalah tradition was to remain even more concealed than it had been until now.

By the time of the building of the Second Temple, the keys to the Kabbalah tradition had been entrusted to the last prophets of the Jewish people as well as to its greatest sages.[16] Together, they constituted the 120 Men of the Great Assembly.[17] It was this body of sages that formulated the *Mishnah* in Tractate *Chagigah*, stating: "The *Ma'aseh Merkavah* may be taught only to individual students (one at a time), and they must be wise, understanding with their own knowledge."[18] They thus insured the continued transmission of the Kabbalah tradition by restricting its practices to the smallest possible circle of masters.[19] Outside of this circle these practices would remain almost totally unknown. This policy continued until after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. It was only then that things began to change.

Looking at the history of the period for a moment, we can see that even after the Second Temple was destroyed, the Romans still allowed some remnant of Jewry to live in the land of Israel. However, in the wake of the Bar Kochba revolt in 132-135 C.E., things took a drastic turn for the worse. At this time the Romans became intent on uprooting the last traces of Torah from the Jewish people. The Hadrianic persecutions reached such a crescendo that all teachers of Torah were condemned to death. This was the time of the Ten Martyrs, among whom were the final transmitters of the Kabbalah tradition.[20]

As a result of these persecutions, the oral tradition from Sinai, in particular the Kabbalah tradition, was in danger of being forgotten. At this time, Rabbi Akiba (50-135 C.E.) received his tradition. He was considered the greatest sage of his generation, a master of the revealed Torah, as well as the concealed. Rabbi Akiba possessed the *Merkavah* (Chariot) tradition.[21] Many sources attribute to Rabbi Akiba the authorship of the *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Formation), one of the oldest and most obscure Kabbalistic texts.[22] Just as the great bulk of the Talmud bears Rabbi Akiba's stamp, so does the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[23] It was Rabbi Akiba who transmitted these teachings in a well-defined form.

At this time, Rabbi Nehunia ben HaKanah and his disciple, the High Priest Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha, put into writing the *Sefer Bahir* (Book of Illumination)[24] and the *Pirkey Hekhalot Rabatai* (The Greater Book of the Divine Chambers).[25] These two sages redacted the traditions they had received in order to preserve them from oblivion during the violent times in which they lived. Commenting on the *Mishnah* quoted above, Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki-Yarchi 1040-1105) asserts that one of the main texts for the study of *Ma'aseh Merkavah* was the *Pirkey Hekhalot Rabatai.* This text contains actual meditative exercises, disciplines, and directions for entering the prophetic state.[26]

The *Zohar* (Book of Splendor), one of the main pillars of Kabbalah, was taught by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai around 135 C.E. Rabbi Shimon also lived during these tumultuous times when the Romans were actually killing all the great teachers, the sole transmitters of the revealed and concealed traditions. During the thirteen years that Rabbi Shimon spent hiding in a cave with his disciples, he taught what he had received from his teachers.[27] During this time as well, he received Divine Inspiration (*Ruach HaKodesh*) and merited the revelation of Elijah the prophet.[28] There was a tradition that if the Oral Torah was endangered to the point of being forgotten, it was permitted to put it into writing.[29] Therefore, all the masters, Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Nehunia, Rabbi Yishmael, and Rabbi Shimon, set a precedent. They began committing parts of the oral tradition to writing. Despite this, however, all of these texts were not given final form for several generations after these teachers. This would be the task of their disciples.[30]

All of these major texts, the *Yetzirah*, the *Bahir*, the *Hekhalot Rabatai*, the *Zohar*, and the various parts of the revealed Torah, contained the basic teachings which had been passed down through the prophets and sages from Moses.[31] The time had come to commit these teachings to writing. Interestingly enough, all of these works are obscure to the point of begging the question: what was gained? What had been written down remained, as the Torah had been in its time, a closed book. The keys were to remain oral. Just enough had been written down to insure that only someone familiar with the tradition would understand.[32] This whole corpus of writings, ranging from the practical understanding of the commandments to the most sublime experience of prophecy, remained a closed book. Yet, the Kabbalah tradition had been saved.

We mentioned that one of the main pillars of Kabbalah was the *Zohar*, from the school of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. It was on the teachings of the *Zohar* that the two greatest Kabbalists of modern times built their entire systems: Rabbi Moses Cordovero (d. 1570), known as the Ramak,

and Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572), universally referred to as the Ari, an acronym for *Elohi Rabbi Yitzchak*, the Godly Rabbi Isaac.

The *Zohar* is opaque. Very often, the Ari used to take a passage from the *Zohar* and meditate on it, perhaps repeating it over and over like a mantra, until the inner meaning was revealed to him.[33] The main relationship between the writings of the Ari (*Kitvey Ari*) and the *Zohar* is that without the Ari's teachings the *Zohar* does not make any sense at all. You could study the *Zohar*, which is a very poetic text, but you cannot detect any system or structure. Once you know the *Kitvey Ari*, the entire *Zohar* becomes an open book. For example, you could study the qualities of metals and see that silver is white, gold is yellow, copper is red, certain things are harder and others softer. Yet, you will not understand the reasons for any of these things until you know atomic theory and solid state physics. Once you have learned these disciplines and you know exactly how light is reflected from certain atoms of copper, you understand why copper is red; it all makes sense and becomes part of a system. The Ari's teaching could be called the atomic theory of the *Zohar*: everything begins to make sense. One can go deeper and deeper, as far as the human mind can delve, and it will always yield new treasures.[34]

The main work of the *Kitvey Ari* is the *Etz Chaim* (Tree of Life). This work expounds the theoretical foundation of the Kabbalah. For one who has mastered the contents of this work, the rest is essentially revealed. Then, the *Pri Etz Chaim* (Fruit of the Tree of Life), shows you how to apply the various teachings of the *Etz Chaim* to all kinds of daily situations: meditations when you put on *tzitzit* or *tefillin*, when you pray or when you eat *matzah*. It also shows you how to develop meditative techniques based on the Ari's teachings.

Then come the works known as the *Shemoneh Shearim* (Eight Gates). The first gate, *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, (Gate of Introductions), covers the same theoretical ground as the *Etz Chaim*. The second is *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*,[35] the Gate of Zoharic Teachings; the third is *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Chazal*, the Gate of Talmudic Teachings;[36] the fourth is *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, the Gate of Biblical Verses; the fifth is *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, the Gate of the Commandments; the sixth is *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, the Gate of Meditations; the seventh is *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, the Gate of Divine Inspiration, which is a general recapitulation and describes how to use the Ari's system as a meditative discipline. In many ways, the *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* is the key to the entire *Kitvey Ari*, because all the previous gates deal with theory,

while the *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* teaches how to put this into practice. The eighth gate is *Sha'ar HaGilgulim*, the Gate of Reincarnations.

An important point which is often lost is that Kabbalah cannot stand by itself without the entire corpus of the revealed Torah: it is an integral part of the Torah. There is not a single Kabbalistic work which does not contain quotations from the Bible, the Talmud and the Midrash and require a profound knowledge of all of these. Bible, Talmud, Midrash and Kabbalah all work together.

There are three types of Kabbalah: theoretical Kabbalah, meditative Kabbalah, and practical Kabbalah. The theoretical Kabbalah essentially gives us a description of the spiritual realm. Meditative Kabbalah tells you how to get into this inner space. Very often, the theoretical Kabbalah is an important guide once you are in there. Otherwise, it is like taking off in a plane; you need maps and charts to make sure you will be able to land. The theoretical Kabbalah gives you these landmarks; in other words, which world you are in, whether on the side of good or of evil, etc. There are very few books published on the meditative Kabbalah, although there are many manuscripts. The paradigm of this is *Sha'arey Kedushah*, Gates of Holiness, written by Rabbi Chaim Vital. This is one of the few published books which tells you how to meditate kabbalistically. Until recently, only the first three sections were published. The fourth section consists of a collection from manuscripts of all the different meditative methods.

The third type is practical or magical Kabbalah. Here too there are almost no books in print, except *Raziel HaMalakh*, the Angel of Divine Mysteries, which is divided into three sections. The first printer dropped the manuscript, however, and printed it in shuffled order. The typesetter found no errors because he was not expected to understand the text. The main work on magic is *Shoshan Yesod Olam*, the Rose Foundation of the World, of which one manuscript exists.[37]

The Spiritual Dimension

One of the most important foundations of our faith is the belief that God is an absolute Unity in every possible respect.[38] We see God as a simple unity, absolutely Simple and absolutely One. There is no element of form, structure or plurality in Him whatsoever.[39]

But this brings up a tricky question. How does God, who is absolutely simple, interact with the different aspects or parts of His creation? How does the One interact with the many?[40]

While we are pondering this question, however, and before we attempt to answer it, we are led to an even more perplexing one. According to

the Kabbalists, God's simple essence is so powerful that it must be hidden if creation is to exist at all. If, on the other hand, God would withdraw Himself completely, creation would utterly cease to exist. We thus have the paradoxical situation where the very existence of anything but God Himself becomes extremely tenuous. The question therefore is no longer "How can the One interact with the many?" but "How can a many exist?"[41]

The Kabbalists answer this question and the previous one by explaining that God created a *spiritual dimension.*[42] This dimension is made up of every basic concept needed to create and sustain the universe. It is essentially through this spiritual domain that God interacts with the universe. It thus forms the bridge between God and creation and acts as a step-down mechanism which prevents creation from being overwhelmed by God's essence while still being infused by it.

According to many Kabbalists it is this spiritual dimension that makes it possible for us to speak about God's multifaceted relationship to the universe without violating the basic principle of His Unity and His Simplicity. For, according to the Kabbalah, any action or state of being that we might ascribe to God refers to something that God created in order to interact with the universe — not to God Himself.[43] Thus, without some knowledge of how this dimension is structured, i. e., knowledge of theoretical Kabbalah, a person cannot really know how God interacts with us. In addition, as we shall see, knowledge of this spiritual dimension provides us with a key to the entire prophetic tradition, beginning with the Bible itself and culminating in the most abstract Kabbalistic ideas.

If we were to imagine the spiritual domain, therefore, it could be described as an infinitely huge spiritual computer. This computer is programmed to fulfill God's one ultimate purpose of bestowing good upon His creation.[44] The main difference between the spiritual domain and a computer is that the components of the former consist of intelligent, sensitive, spiritual beings.[45] Since the main point of the theoretical Kabbalah is to resolve the paradox of God's interaction with creation, it deals almost exclusively with the structure and dynamics of this domain.

Chapter 2: GOD and MAN

The Purpose of Creation

The foundation of Judaism is the realization that life has purpose. This, of course, is true of every major religion, but in the case of Judaism it is absolutely central. Insofar as we can say that Judaism has one central teaching, it is that man's existence has purpose. The universe was created for a reason, and somehow, man partakes of it.[1]

But to merely say that the universe exists for a purpose is not enough. Judaism goes a step further and states that both man and the universe have purpose because they were created by a purposeful being. We call that being God.[2]

The truth is that we do not have the power to understand what God is, and just as we cannot understand Him, so we cannot understand His reasons. There is nothing we can say about God Himself. He exists — and we can say no more. But we can speak of His relationship with His world. We can try to understand the world and ask why it exists. We can look and see what God Himself has taught us about the purpose of creation.

One of the main things that we can say about God is that He is good. Not only do we say that He is good, but also that He defines good. Every act of God contains the most pure and infinite Good that can exist. His goodness and His love are two of the most basic of God's qualities that we can understand, and they work together to bring about His purpose. The Psalmist sings of this and says, "God is good to all, His love rests on all His deeds" (Psalms 145:9).[3]

God had absolutely no need to create the world. God Himself is absolute perfection, and He has no need for anything, even creation.[4] Thus, to the best of our understanding, we can say that God created the universe for the purpose of bestowing good upon man.

God Himself calls His creation an act of goodness. It is for this reason that, at the end of the first six days of creation, after making man, the Torah says, "And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:35).[5] We are being told that the creation of the universe was an expression of His goodness.

This is why God made man last in the order of creation. All the world

had to be prepared for man. God therefore tells us through His prophet, "I have made the earth, and have created man upon it" (Isaiah 45:12). For it is man who will ultimately be the recipient of God's goodness, thereby fulfilling God's purpose in creation.[6]

The Talmud provides us with a parable about this: a king once built a beautiful palace, decorating it lavishly and stocking it with the best food and drink. When it was all finished, he invited his guests, saying, "If there are no guests, then what pleasure does the king have with all the good things that he has prepared?"[7] After everything had been prepared, the guest — man — was brought into the world.[8]

The Ultimate Gift

No matter how selfless a human act may be, there is always some benefit to the doer, even if it is nothing more than a degree of self-satisfaction. God, on the other hand, has no need for anything. God had absolutely no need to create the world and there was no lack in Him that creation could satisfy. Creation was therefore the most perfect act of altruism, love and goodness.

We say that God created the world in order to bestow good upon man. But what is this good?

First of all, we must realize that any good that God gives must be the ultimate good that His creation can accept. The Psalmist said, "How great is Your good, stored up for those who fear You" (Psalms 31:20). The Sages interpret this to mean that God bestows good in the greatest possible abundance.[9] In another place, they teach that this verse means that God is telling us, "You according to your strength, Me according to Mine."[10] In other words, God gives us the greatest good that we can possibly accept.

But what is this ultimate good? What is the greatest good that God can bestow?

The answer is really quite simple. The ultimate good is God Himself. The greatest possible good that He can bestow is Himself.[11] There is no greater good than achieving a degree of unity with, and experiencing, the Creator Himself. The Psalmist thus said, "I have no good but You" (Psalms 16:2). In the Talmud, Rabbi Acha interprets this to mean that no true good exists in the world except that of God Himself.[12]

The ultimate good is to partake of God, and it is this good that He planned to give the world. He would create a world where His creatures could ultimately partake of His essence and experience Him.

The Kabbalists teach that this is the concept of God's most sacred name, the Tetragrammaton, *YHVH* (יהוה).[13] The Tetragrammaton consists

of four letters *Yod* (י), *Heh* (ה), *Vav* (ו) and *Heh* (ה). These four letters have a very special significance.

The Tetragrammaton is related to the past, present, and future tense of the Hebrew word "to be." In Hebrew, "was" is *Hayah* (היה), "is" is *Hoveh* (הוה) and "will be" is *Yihyeh* (יהיה). Therefore, when one reads the Tetragrammaton, one should have in mind that God "was, is and will be" all at the same instant.[14] This indicates that God is utterly transcendental, and higher than the dimension of time. God exists in a realm where time does not exist.[15] At the same time, the Tetragrammaton denotes that God is *Mehaveh* (מהוה) , "the One who brings all existence into being."[16] It is in this sense that the Tetragrammaton refers to God's causal relationship with His creation. He is the source of all being and existence and His essence permeates creation. [17]

We can understand this on the basis of an ancient Kabbalistic teaching which states that the four letters of the Name contain the mystery of Charity.[18] According to this teaching, the first letter *Yod* (י) can be likened to a coin. The letter *Yod* is small and simple like a coin.

The second letter, *Heh* (ה), represents the hand that gives the coin. Every letter in the Hebrew alphabet also represents a number. Since *Heh* is the fifth letter of the alphabet, it has a numerical value of five. The "five" of *Heh* alludes to the five fingers of the hand.

The third letter, *Vav* (ו), which has the form of an arm, denotes reaching out and giving. Furthermore, in Hebrew, the word *Vav* means a "hook," and thus *Vav* has the connotation of connection. Indeed, in Hebrew, the word for the conjunction "and" is represented by the letter *Vav* prefixed to a word.

Finally, the fourth letter, the final *Heh* (ה), is the hand of the beggar who receives the coin.

This is the essence of charity on the mundane level. "Charity" can also be understood, however, on a divine level.[19] The greatest good that God gives is existence itself. We have no intrinsic claim to existence and cannot demand this from God. When God gives us existence, therefore, it is a gift of love and the most perfect act of charity.

The *Yod* now represents the gift of existence itself. At the level of *Yod*, however, existence is still not ours. Just as the letter *Yod* at the end of a word represents personal possession, on the level of *Yod*, Existence is still God's personal possession. In addition, the letter *Yod* at the beginning of a word denotes the future, something that is still in potential. So, also, at the level of *Yod*, existence is still hidden and

unavailable. There will be no access to it until a hand is created to receive it.

The *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton is God's hand which holds the existence He wishes to give us. At the level of *Yod*, existence is transcendental, unknowable and imperceptible. It must undergo concretization in order to become accessible to us. This is indicated in the numerical value of *Heh*, which alludes to the five fingers of the hand. This is also indicated by the way the letter *Heh* is used as a prefix and suffix. At the end of a word it indicates the feminine possessive. As a prefix, it is the definite article "the," grasping and specifying a particular object. In both these contexts, the letter *Heh* has the function of delineating and holding. In the Tetragrammaton, the first *Heh* represents a vessel coming into existence to hold and define the abstract power of creation.

The *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton is God's arm reaching out to give us existence. As we shall see, it is at the level of the *Vav* that the concept of giving is brought to its perfection.[20] This means that a balance must be struck between the giver and the receiver. This, in turn, implies a concept of relationship. To the degree that we can express this concept, as much as God wants to give, His giving must be consistent with our capacity to receive.[21] Thus, at the level of the *Vav*, the possibility of a reciprocal relationship is created. How much man will be able to receive, as well as the way he will receive, will be determined by man's actions. This reciprocal relationship will also result in man's enlarging his ability to receive the very thing that God wishes to give.

Finally, the last *Heh* of the Name is our hand which receives existence. Of course, God must give us even this hand. Thus, in a sense God gives us the ability to receive existence from Him. But it is most important to open our hand to receive what God is giving. The more we expand our awareness of God's Presence and the divine hand that guides our lives, the greater will be our capacity to receive.

The letters of the Tetragrammaton can teach us many things about God's relationship with His creation. On the one hand, we learn that God is utterly transcendental and thus totally different than anything else in creation. On the other, we learn that God's essence permeates all creation and gives it continual existence. In this sense, existence itself is merely a shadow or a mirror of God's power. As the Kabbalists explain, if God were to reveal Himself fully, creation and all that is in it could not endure and would be absolutely nullified. If God would reveal Himself, there would be no possibility of independent existence

on any level whatsoever. It is because God restrains and conceals Himself that creation can endure.[22]

This involves one of the most important concepts in Kabbalah — the *Tzimtzum*-Contraction or Self-Constriction of God's light.[23] The reason for the *Tzimtzum* stems from a basic paradox. God must be in the world; yet, if He does not restrain Himself from it, all creation would be overwhelmed by His essence.[24]

The reason for the *Tzimtzum*, therefore, was so that creation could take place. Creation must exist as an independent entity and therefore cannot be totally infused with the Divine essence.[25] At the same time, however, it cannot be said that God's essence does not infuse all creation, since, "There is no place empty of Him."[26] God must therefore divorce Himself from creation, yet, at the same time, He must also remain intimately connected with it. This is the primary paradox of creation.[27]

Free Will

One of the best analogies of the relationship between God and the world is that of the soul and the body. In a sense, we can call God the "soul" of the universe. Of course, the analogy is far from exact, since God cannot be compared to anything in creation.[28] But it does serve the useful purpose of further clarifying His relationship to the world.

For example, we are told: Just as the soul fills the body, so God fills the world. Just as the soul sees and is unseen, so God sees and is unseen. Just as the soul dwells in the innermost chamber, so God dwells in the innermost chamber.[29]

Actually, we see here a special case of the paradox of creation with regard to man and the soul. The soul is our direct connection to spirituality and thus to God. It is our true self without which we would be an empty shell. In this sense it must totally fill our body and permeate our being. On the other hand, the soul must be hidden and unseen so that we can function as free and independent beings and not be overwhelmed by God's existence. This is the parallel paradox of man's free will.[30]

We can appreciate this more if we imagine ourselves constantly standing in God's presence. How would we behave if God were to reveal Himself to us? Would we really be free? If we were constantly aware of God's existence, could we go against His will?

God wanted us to bear full responsibility for our actions and full credit for the good that we do. He wanted human action to be a matter of free choice rather than compulsion. It is for this reason that free will is one of the most essential ingredients in all creation.[31]

But there is a much deeper way of looking at the concept of free will.

We have said that the greatest good that God could give is Himself. The purpose of creation was therefore to give man a chance to come close to God.

When we speak of coming close to God, we are not speaking of physical closeness. God exists in a realm far beyond the mere physical. When we speak of closeness to God, we are speaking of spiritual closeness.

But what is closeness in a nonphysical sense?

We find the hint of an answer in a teaching from the Talmud. The Torah states, "You shall follow the Lord your God, fear Him and keep His commandments, obey Him and serve Him, and bind yourself to Him" (Deuteronomy 13:5). The Talmud asks, "How can one bind himself to God?" Is it not written, "The Lord your God is a consuming fire?" The Talmud answers that we bind ourselves to God by imitating His attributes.[32]

The Talmud is teaching us that in a spiritual sense, closeness is resemblance.[33] Two things that resemble each other are close in a spiritual sense. Things that differ are distant. The more two things resemble each other, the closer they are spiritually.[34]

We can now understand the reason for free will in a deeper sense.

As we stated earlier, the good that God's plan has destined for His world is the ultimate Good, namely God Himself. His plan is to give a creature, namely man, the opportunity to draw close to Him.

But when we speak of giving such good, we immediately face a dilemma. God is the giver and man the receiver, and as such, they are two opposites. In a spiritual sense, they are as far from each other as north and south. Giver and receiver are exact opposites. As long as man is a mere receiver, he stands at the opposite pole away from God, the Giver. In a spiritual sense, man and God would then be ultimately distant from each other.

Therefore, God arranged things so that man himself would be the creator of his own good and the master of his own perfection. As a result, he would resemble His Creator and enjoy the greatest possible degree of closeness to the Divine.[35]

Thus, free-willed man is the primary and essential element in creation. Everything else created is only a means for bringing about man's closeness to God. All other created things, whether above or below man, exist only for his sake, to provide an environment where he can earn his place in a world which is all good.[36]

There are therefore two basic concepts which comprise human

existence. First, man must earn the good that God has prepared. Secondly, he must receive this good.

There is, however, a basic difference in environment required to actualize these two concepts.

For earning his own perfection and closeness to the Divine, the maximum possible challenge is required. This in turn will result in the greatest possible pleasure of accomplishment. Such an environment must therefore be one where neither God Himself nor the divine nature of our deeds is obvious. It must be a world where God is hidden, and where good can only be accomplished with great difficulty.[37]

The place where man receives good, on the other hand, must be the exact opposite. In order for man to enjoy the maximum possible pleasure from the good he has done, the true nature of his deeds must be as obvious as possible. The existence of God must also be as apparent as possible in such a world. It must be an environment where man realizes the goodness of his deeds and their relationship to God.

It is for this reason that God created two levels of existence. First there is this world — *Olam HaZeh* — a place of accomplishment and maximum challenge. Secondly there is the World to Come — *Olam HaBa* — the world of ultimate reward, where both God's existence and the nature of one's deeds are totally apparent.[38]

The Universes

We have seen that man is the culmination of creation, the purpose for which everything was brought into existence. In creating the universe, God concealed His light so that creation could exist as an independent entity. This, in turn, was in order to bestow His goodness upon man through his resembling his Creator. Thus, the creation took place as a primary concealment of the Divine Presence in order to create an environment for man.

The Kabbalists speak of creation as taking place in five general stages. Each stage or "universe" is preceded by and is the outcome of an initial *tzimtzum*-contraction of God's "light." In this way, God created the universes on a scale of descending magnitude. Each *tzimtzum* capitalizes on the previous degree of concealment brought about, and merely serves to further attenuate the light.

The creative process thus unfolds from above to below, involving at every stage a greater diminution of the light. This results in the possibility of greater concealment of and separation from the Divine at every successive level. This process culminates in the physical universe, the environment which is characterized by the greatest concealment of

the Divine. Finally, in the physical universe, God's presence is all but completely undetectable.

The five universes are called *Adam Kadmon*-Primordial Man, *Atzilut*-Nearness, *Beriyah*-Creation, *Yetzirah*-Formation and finally *Asiyah*-Action or Completion.[39] As we shall see, the four lower universes correspond to the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. The apex (*Kutz*) which initiates the drawing of the first letter *Yod*, corresponds to the first and highest universe. We will discuss these five universes in greater detail in the following chapters.

The Inner Space

The Kabbalists refer to five levels of the soul. The highest level, corresponding to *Adam* Kadmon and the apex of the *Yod*, is *Yechidah*-Unique Essence. The next, corresponding to the letter *Yod* itself, is *Chayah*-Living Essence. The next three, corresponding to the last three letters of the Name, are *Neshamah*-Breath, *Ruach*-Spirit, and finally *Nefesh*-Soul.[40]

Levels of the Soul

Soul level	*Universe*	*Name*
Yechidah-Unique Essence	*Adam Kadmon*-Primeval Man	Apex of *Yod*
Chayah-Living Essence	*Atzilut*-Nearness	*Yod*
Neshamah-Breath or Pneuma	*Beriyah*-Creation	*Heh*
Ruach-Spirit	*Yetzirah*-Formation	*Vav*
Nefesh-Soul	*Asiyah*-Completion	*Heh*

Looking at the etymology of these terms, we see that the word *Yechidah* (יחידה) comes from *Echad* (אחד) and *Yichud* (יחוד) meaning "oneness" and "unity." The word *Chayah* (חיה) derives from *Chai* (חי) which means "life," and *Chayut* (חיות) "life force." The word *Neshamah* (נשמה) stems from *Neshimah* (נשימה) meaning "breath." The word *Ruach* (רוח) is often translated as "spirit," but it is also found with the connotations of wind, air or direction. The word *Nefesh* (נפש) comes from the root *Nafash* meaning to rest, as in the verse, "And on the seventh day, He ceased work and rested (*nafash*)" (Exodus 31:17).

The Kabbalists teach that the five levels of man's soul, which originates in the highest realms, parallel the five universes and correspond to the inner dimension of each universe.[41] The universes represent the external space or dimension of God's relationship to the world. The soul, on the other hand, represents the inner space of that relationship.

The five levels of the soul thus form a chain linking man to the supernal universes and to God. Since the soul constitutes the inner dimension of the universes and the reason for which God originally concealed His light, man's primary connection is directly with God. Thus, the Torah says, "And God blew into his nostrils a soul of life" (Genesis 2:7). Commenting on the inner meaning of this verse, the *Zohar* notes that when God "exhales," He does so from His innermost being. Furthermore, even after having placed His breath into man's body, this breath is still not severed from Him.[42] This indicates that man's soul is an extension of God's breath and is directly connected to Him.

The Glassblower Analogy

This relationship can be illustrated with an analogy.[43] Imagine a glassblower who decides to make a beautiful vessel. This "decision," emanating from the innermost will, is the level of *Yechidah*-Uniqueness. It corresponds to the universe of *Adam Kadmon* and the apex of the *Yod*.

Next we see the glassblower himself before he begins to blow out. This is the level of *Chayah*-Living Essence, corresponding to the universe of *Atzilut* where the life-force is still within the realm of the Divine. This level parallels the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton.

Next, the breath (*Neshimah*) emanates from the mouth of the glassblower and flows as a pressurized wind (*Ruach*) through the glassblowing pipe, expanding in all directions and forming a crude vessel. The wind finally comes to rest (*Nafash*) in the completed vessel.

This analogy is extremely useful in a meditative sense. For one thing, it provides us with a model for comparing various states of consciousness with the different levels of the soul. For another, it allows us to visualize our own direct connection with the Divine.

The highest levels of the soul, for instance, are not yet separated from their divine source. Thus, in the analogy, they are both still within the mind and lungs of the glassblower. From God's point of view, they are "internal" aspects of man's soul, while the lower levels of the soul are "externalizations." This is an extremely important distinction, for from the human standpoint, the exact opposite is the case.

Of the five parts of the soul, the *Neshamah, Ruach* and *Nefesh* are called *Penimi'im*-Internalizations because we have the ability to draw these levels down into our earthly existence. The levels of *Yechidah* and *Chayah*, however, will only be internalized in the World to Come. It is for this reason that they are now called *Makifim*-Envelopments or *Atarot*-Crowns, because they actually transcend our individual personalities.[44]

This is alluded to in the Talmudic statement that "In the Ultimate Future, there will be no jealousy, hatred or strife... The righteous will sit with their crowns in their heads, delighting in the radiance of the Divine Presence."[45] The symbolism of a crown resting on top of the head generally represents our inability to perceive or grasp a spiritual concept with our minds. As a result, this concept is said to transcend human intellect and envelop it from without. In the World to Come, however, these crowns will be "in their heads."[46] Man will be able to perceive the radiance of the Divine to the greatest extent possible without completely losing his individuality.

Nefesh

The lowest part of the soul interfaces with the physical body. This is the level where we are able to accept the spirituality that God desires to give us. Hence, it parallels the "hand that receives," the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton.

It is on the level of *Nefesh* that a person gains an awareness of the body as a receptacle for the spiritual. This is only possible, however, when one is able to isolate himself from the constant stream of internal and external stimuli that occupies his thoughts. Awareness of the spiritual thus necessarily begins by quieting down the awareness of the physical. It is for this reason that this part of the soul is essentially passive rather than active. Before one is ready to experience the powerful influence of *Ruach*, all static must be tuned out. This is also suggested by the term *Nefesh*, which literally means "resting soul."

Ruach

The second level of the soul is *Ruach*, the "wind" blowing down to us from God's breath. This "wind" is seen as the connection between God's "mouth," as it were, and the person. Therefore, it parallels the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton which also denotes connection and transition.

When the air around us is at rest, are we aware of it? We are aware of air when there is a wind. Similarly, we are aware of the sea of spirituality that surrounds us when we experience the level of *Ruach*, which is like a spiritual wind in motion. At this level, a person goes beyond the quiet spirituality of *Nefesh* and feels a completely different kind of motion. In this state of consciousness, information can be communicated; one can see visions, hear things and become conscious of higher levels of spirituality.[47] Reaching the level of *Ruach*, one feels a moving spirit rather than a quieting one. At the highest levels, this becomes the experience of *Ruach HaKodesh*-Divine Inspiration. This

is the prophetic state where a person feels himself completely elevated and transformed by God's spirit.[48]

Neshamah

On the level of *Neshamah*, you would experience Divine breath. This is the "vessel" that holds the spiritual nature that God wants to give us. Hence it can be said to parallel the "hand that gives," the first *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton. On this level, you not only become aware of spirituality, but also of its source. This is exactly the difference between a breath and a wind. Feeling a breeze on a hot summer day is pleasant, but it is very different than having someone you are very close to breathe down your neck; this bears a certain intimacy. Hence, the level of *Neshamah* is when a person gets to the level of a very close intimacy with God.

According to our analogy, we could add that the glassblower needs a tube in order not to burn his lips. He cannot blow directly into the molten glass because the substance of his body and the material with which he is working are incompatible. In the same way, we need *Ruach* as an intermediate link between the *Neshamah* and that part of the soul which rests inside the material of the body. In this case, however, it would be our bodies, and not the lips of the glassblower, which would be burned.

We have mentioned the basic idea in Kabbalah that two levels which are similar are said to be "close." Since there is no concept of space in the spiritual dimension, "closeness" can only be defined as resemblance. Conversely, when two levels are different or opposite, they are said to be distant and incompatible. This necessitates the concept of a "spiritual connector" to bridge the gap between dissimilar levels. *Neshamah* and *Nefesh* represent, respectively, the two opposite concepts of giving and receiving. They are spiritually opposite and therefore distant from each other. In our context, they can be defined as thesis and antithesis. Thus, *Ruach*, which represents the transmission of spiritual energy, is the synthesis which links the two.

Chayah and Yechidah

If you want to go further than *Neshamah*, what would be the next level, beyond breath? Getting back to the allegory of the glassblower, you have the breath, the wind, and finally air settling and forming the vessel. What would come before the breath? The air when it is in the blower's lungs. The very life-force of the blower. This is what is called *Chayah*-Living Essence. It is the fourth level of the soul, where

it is not yet separated from the blower. It is actually the experience of being within the realm of the Divine.

Finally, what would be the level beyond that? One could think of it as the decision to blow in the first place, getting into the very psyche of the blower. The unique idea he has of creating would be on the level of *Yechidah*-Unique Essence, the highest of the five levels. Beyond that, you are in the realm of the unimaginable.

Chapter 3: THE UNIVERSES

The Olamot-Universes

We have seen that the Kabbalists speak of five comprehensive levels of universes. These constitute a descending order of revelation that culminates in the near total concealment of God's light in the physical universe.

It is this concealment that allows for the possibility of a finite continuum of distinct and separate worlds to exist. In this sense, all the universes were created as vehicles through which we may draw close to God. They act as filters, allowing us to draw near and still not be obliterated by His Infinite Light.[1]

This is the reason why, in the Hebrew language, the word *Olam* (עולם) which means "universe," is derived from the same root as *Alam* (עלם) meaning "to be concealed."[2]

We see from this etymological connection that it is the *Olam*-Universe which conceals the Divine. When we say that God is *Melekh HaOlam*, King of the Universe, we mean that He is the King who hides Himself in His world.

Similarly, the universes are said to act as "garments" for God's light.[3] Describing the act of creation, the Psalmist thus says, "You have dressed Yourself in majesty and splendor; You have covered Yourself with light like a garment" (Psalms 104:1-4). A garment serves two purposes, to conceal and to reveal. With respect to God, the concept of "garment" conceals His true essence, while at the same time, attenuating it so that it can be revealed.

The *Zohar* thus explains that the supernal worlds not only resemble a kind of ladder where each lower level is beneath the one above it; the higher universes also enter into and are "clothed" within the lower universes. The deepest and most internal levels are also the highest and most transcendent. Above all, God's essence is absolutely transcendent and "surrounds all worlds." At the same time, it permeates the innermost essence of all reality and is "clothed" within it.[4]

The Master Plan

The five universes are often explained in terms of their parallels at

the human level. Man's innermost will and volition corresponds to the universe of *Adam Kadmon*. The level of preconceptual or undifferentiated mind corresponds to *Atzilut*. The process of thought corresponds to the universe of *Beriyah*. Speech and communication parallel the universe of *Yetzirah* and, finally, action corresponds to *Asiyah*.

Adam Kadmon	Will
Atzilut	Mind
Beriyah	Thought
Yetzirah	Speech
Asiyah	Action

To illustrate this, imagine an architect planning a large building complex.[5] First he decides what kind of buildings will fit his needs. He draws up a basic blueprint and contemplates how each building will best fulfill its function in relation to all the rest. He then gives orders to his workers and begins construction.

In this analogy, the level of *Adam Kadmon* is represented by the decision of the architect who has to know what he wants to build before he starts planning. *Atzilut* would then parallel the comprehensive plan and design of the project. At this point, a complete idea has taken form which can be represented by drawing abstract technical symbols on paper. The architect is still very far, however, from the finished product. These two stages therefore can be said to take place "in his office," before he begins the actual construction. What is needed now is to translate these all-inclusive symbols into the details of physical reality.

At the building site itself, the architect's job will involve thinking (*Beriyah*) how to implement the general plan, speech (*Yetzirah*), where he is transmitting instructions to his workers, and action (*Asiyah*), where things get done and the architect's entire purpose is finally realized.

Taking this example even further, we can see that the same process is involved in all purposeful activity. When a person first decides to do something, he conceives a general plan. As he gets closer to implementing his plan, his thought processes almost automatically trigger nerve impulses which travel through the body. Finally, his muscles "obey" the brain's commands and perform the desired action.

Here we see the hidden levels of volition and undifferentiated thought being expressed through conscious mental activity, the lightning-speed communications network of the nervous system, and completion of the process in deed. Each level is a further concretization of the stage preceding it and becomes the motivating force that permeates the stage

following it. This is the meaning of the *Zohar's* teaching that the highest levels are "clothed" within the lowest ones. We can almost sense the presence of the deepest will and purpose in the completed action. Moreover, we can see that just as in a seed the blueprint for an entire tree is encoded, so the completed action exists in the subtlest way within the original will. This is the underlying meaning of the phrase "The completed action is in the first thought."[6]

Adam Kadmon

One of the basic axioms of the Kabbalah is that nothing can be said about God Himself. It is for this reason that God is called *Ain Sof*, which means literally, the One without end or limit. God is infinite and therefore undefineable and uncharacterizable. He is limitless Being and Existence before the act of creation as well as subsequent to it. Even conceptually, there is no category in existence which can define God. This is what the *Tikuney Zohar* means when it says "No thought can grasp Him."[7]

On the level of *Ain Sof*, therefore, nothing else exists. Every concept and category associated with existence must be created from nothing. The primordial will to create is the first of these categories. According to the Kabbalists, the level of *Adam Kadmon* refers to this profound concept of God's Will which constitutes the underlying basis for all further existence.[8]

Since no quality can be ascribed to *Ain Sof*, it follows that if God has or uses "Will," He must have created it. The *Zohar* explicitly states that God does not have "will" in any anthropomorphic sense.[9] Rather, to the extent that we can express it, in order to create the world, God had to will the concept of creation into existence. In order to do this, He had to create the concept of "will." This, of course, leads to an ultimate paradox, for if God is going to create "will," this in itself presupposes an act of will. This means that going back to *Ain Sof*, to God Himself, involves an infinite regression.

For this reason *Adam Kadmon* serves as a kind of interface between the Infinite Creator and the finite creation. As such, it constitutes an almost complete oneness with the Divine light that flows into it, and cannot be properly called a "universe." It corresponds to the apex of the *Yod* in the Tetragrammaton and the level of *Yechidah*-Unity. It is so sublime that it can be spoken of as completely attached to and united with the Infinite *Ain Sof*.[10]

It is because of this "proximity" to *Ain Sof* that *Adam Kadmon* is also referred to as *Ain*-Nothingness.[11] This is not a nothingness which

implies a lack of existence. There is no deficiency in the *Ain*, only fullness beyond the capacity of any created being to experience directly. Rather, it is nothingness because of the lack of a category in the mind in which to place it. *Ain* is therefore only "nothingness" relative to us. It is the nothingness of ineffability and hiddenness. It is no-thing because it is so much more rarified than the some-thing of creation. In this sense, like God Himself, it is ultimately unfathomable and beyond our ability to comprehend.[12]

On the other hand, God's Will permeates the entire system of creation. The continued existence of creation, in fact, depends entirely on God's willing it. Since only God exists in an absolute sense, everything else exists because God wills its existence continually.[13] A human architect can design and construct a building and then forget about it. But God's creation is more than that. Nothing can exist without God constantly willing it to exist. Without this, it would utterly cease to exist.[14]

Finally, *Adam Kadmon* alludes to the ultimate purpose of creation. The term itself is an anthropomorphism meaning literally "primordial man." The Kabbalists explain this when they tell us that the very first ingredient in creation was the thought of *Adam*-Humanity.[15] Though man was last in the external order of creation, the thought of man precedes creation. He is the original purpose and intention for which the entire building was constructed. The thought of man is therefore called *Kadmon*, primordial. The first manifestation of God's purpose is thus called *Adam Kadmon*, the primordial will that preceded all creation and hints to its ultimate goal.

Atzilut

The next level following *Adam Kadmon*, and thus further removed from *Ain Sof*, is the universe of *Atzilut*. *Atzilut* receives its existence via *Adam Kadmon*, but in lesser measure. The identical light of *Ain Sof* is revealed in *Atzilut* at a lesser intensity. *Atzilut*, however, is still in such proximity to *Ain Sof* that it is fully absorbed in the Divine. For this reason, *Atzilut*, too, is referred to as *Ain*-Nothingness. It is the nothingness that lies beyond the limits of human consciousness.[16]

The concept of *Atzilut* is a very difficult one to describe. It could be characterized as the level of reality that does not yet exist. We exist within time and our normal framework of thought is within time itself. Hence, the only things that are real to us are things that exist at the same time we do. Thoughts have an existence in our mind, they exist in the present. Somebody who is going to be born a thousand years from now does not exist as far as we are concerned, because our

whole thought process and our whole existence is in time. Yet, for a Divine being who exists beyond time, there could be a reality of the present and of the future as well. This reality is not in the present, however, so it does not exist for us.

The term *Atzilut* (אצילות) is derived from the root *Etzel* (אצל), meaning "nearness."[17] This is because *Atzilut*, relative to all that follows it, is closest to and represents the most direct intimacy with the Divine. *Atzilut* corresponds to the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton and the level of *Chayah*-Life Essence. As such, it is the essence of existence that God desires to bestow to His creation.

Atzilut is the domain of the *Sefirot*.[18] Here again, we have God's Will, and in addition, His Wisdom, Understanding, Love, Power, Kingship and so on. These refer to the various concepts, qualities and attributes that God uses to create and oversee His universe. As such, they are the basic ingredients of creation. In *Atzilut*, however, these basic concepts or axioms are undifferentiated. The *Sefer Yetzirah* thus refers to them as the "Ten Ineffable *Sefirot*" or the "Ten *Sefirot* of Nothingness."[19] It is only when they are clothed in the lower universes that they can be conceived as separate forces.[20]

Beriyah

The universe of *Beriyah*-Creation is below, and receives its existence via, the domain of *Atzilut*. It is in *Beriyah* that the effects of the original *Tzimtzum*-Constriction begin to manifest themselves.[21] While *Adam Kadmon* and *Atzilut* are considered the realm of *Yichud*-Unity, the universe of *Beriyah* is the beginning of *Perud*, independent existence and separation.[22]

The term *Beriyah* (בריאה) derives from the Hebrew root *Bara* (ברא), meaning "to create," and the Aramaic *Bar* (בר) meaning "outside" or "external."[23] It is for this reason that *Beriyah* indicates the concept of creating something completely new and distinct, a creation *ex nihilo*. In Hebrew this is designated as *Yesh Mi-Ain* (יש מאין), literally "something from nothing."[24] Relative to *Atzilut*, which is called "Nothingness" and "Ineffable," *Beriyah* is separate and outside the realm of the Divine. *Beriyah* also corresponds to the first *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, "the hand that defines and makes existence accessible." It is therefore through this level that we begin to relate, as independent entities, to God.

It is in the universe of *Beriyah* that the level of *Neshamah* originates. *Neshamah* thus represents a certain degree of separateness from God. At the same time, the level of *Neshamah* implies an intimate awareness of the Divine. We mentioned that, on the level of *Chayah*, individuality

as such ceases to exist. It is the *Ain*-Nothingness that our mind has no ability to grasp. *Neshamah*, on the other hand, is the beginning of *Yesh*-Somethingness and independent existence. It is a *Yesh*, however, that is aware of and can bind itself to the *Ain* that precedes it.[25]

The universe of *Beriyah* is also called the "Universe of the Throne."[26] In general, the concept of a throne, when used with respect to God, indicates a sense of lowering."[27] When a person sits down, he lowers his body. Similarly, when God "sits," He "lowers" His essence so as to be concerned with His creation. As we shall see, when the Bible speaks of God's Throne, it is speaking of the vehicle through which He expresses such concern. This vehicle is the universe of *Beriyah*.

Yetzirah

The term *Yetzirah* (יצירה) comes from the root *Yatzar* (יצר), meaning "to form." *Yetzirah* thus denotes the formation of something from a substance that already exists, *Yesh Mi-Yesh* (יש מיש), "something from something.[28]

It is the level of *Ruach* and corresponds to the angelic world of spiritual forces that lies immediately beyond our physical domain.[29] When speaking of the creation of the *Olamot*, God says through the prophet Isaiah, "I form (*yotzer*) light and create (*boreh*) darkness" (Isaiah 45:7). Here again, the concept of "creation" means "something from nothing," while "formation" is "something from something." Darkness is a completely novel concept and has no relationship to God. It is therefore "created" — "something from nothing."[30] Light, on the other hand, emanates from God's essence, and is therefore "something from something."

In general, thought is said to be on the level of *Beriyah*-Creation, since thought is "something from nothing." Speech, on the other hand, emanates from thought — "something from something" — and is therefore on the level of *Yetzirah*-Formation.[31] When Isaiah says that God "forms light," this is an exact parallel to the Torah's statement in Genesis that "God said, let there be light." The phrase "God said" indicates the level of speech, which is itself the level of *Yetzirah*-Formation.

In no place in the account of creation, however, does it state that "God said" that darkness should be created. Darkness therefore does not involve speech, but only thought, which is the level of *Beriyah*-Creation. The Torah thus states, "And darkness on the face of the deep" (Genesis 1:2), without any mention of a saying.

Asiyah

The term *Asiyah* (עשיה) derives from the root *Asah* (עשה) meaning "to make." *Asiyah* therefore has the connotation of final action and completion.[32] Corresponding to the level of *Nefesh*, it represents a consciousness of the world as a vessel that was made to receive God's light. It is in the universe of *Asiyah* that the spiritual actually interacts with the physical dimension, bringing the entire continuum of the five universes to its intended fulfillment.[33]

The entire statement that Isaiah makes concerning God's creation of the *Olamot* is, "I form light and create darkness; I make (*asah*) peace and create (*boreh*) evil" (Isaiah 45:7). "Creation" is generally said to refer to the very first step, creating "something from nothing." "Making," on the other hand, refers to the completion of a concept.

It is therefore written that God "creates evil," thus equating "evil" with "darkness." Similar to darkness which is the restraint and constriction of light, the possibility of evil had to be created "something from nothing."[34] Before the original *Tzimtzum*-Constriction, there was nothing but the light of the Infinite Being. God's very Infinity, however, precludes the existence of anything which can receive the essence of life that He wishes to give. It was therefore necessary to "create" something completely different and opposite from Himself. This is the concept of constriction itself, which is here called "darkness and evil."

Darkness (Constriction) allows for the existence of a finite world where God's Presence is absolutely undetectable and both good and evil can operate freely. This in turn sets the stage for a creature far removed and opposite from God who can resemble Him by freely choosing "light" over "darkness," "good" over "evil." The very existence of evil, in fact, is solely in order to be transformed by man in the act of choosing good. Through his struggle man attains *Shalom*-Peace and unifies himself and the creation with God.[35]

Isaiah's Vision

Another verse in the book of Isaiah refers to all five universes and provides us with a key to the entire Kabbalistic view of the universe. God says, "All was called [into existence] for My Name's sake. For My Glory I have created it, I have formed it and I have also completed it" (Isaiah 43:7). This verse again emphasizes the fact that the process of creation is initiated at the highest level of God's Purpose and culminates in the final realization of that Purpose in the physical world.[36]

All five levels are mentioned here in order: My Name, My Glory, Creation, Formation and Completion. These correspond to the five levels

of universes. "My Name" refers to *Adam Kadmon*, and "My Glory" to the universe of *Atzilut*. The verse concludes with an explicit mention of the next three levels: Creation (*Beriyah*), Formation (*Yetzirah*) and Completion (*Asiyah*).

As we have seen, the four lower universes parallel the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*, which represent the totality of existence. The apex (*Kutz*) which initiates the writing of the first letter *Yod*, is the underlying basis for the entire Name. This apex corresponds to the first and highest universe, *Adam Kadmon* (God's Will), which precedes creation, permeates it and hints at its ultimate goal. Isaiah thus refers to this level with the comprehensive term "My Name."[37]

The next universe, *Atzilut*-Nearness, is referred to as "My Glory." As mentioned, *Atzilut* is the domain of the "Ten Ineffable *Sefirot*." "Glory" always refers to *Atzilut*, specifically the last *Sefirah* of *Atzilut*, *Malkhut*-Kingship.[38] *Atzilut* is also the subject of all prophecy. The revelation of God's Will (*Adam Kadmon*) is always transmitted through the prophetic vision of the universe of *Atzilut*.[39] As we shall see, therefore, all of the prophets emphasize that they envisioned "God's Glory."

Below *Atzilut* is the universe of *Beriyah*, the domain of the throne. The Ari states that the prophecy of Isaiah took place in *Beriyah*. For him, the light of *Atzilut* was completely clothed in the universe of *Beriyah*, the universe of the Throne of Glory.[40] Isaiah therefore describes himself as he sees God "sitting on a high and exalted Throne" (6:1). He continues and describes the *Seraphim*-Burning Angels of *Beriyah*: "The *Seraphim* stood around Him. Each one had six wings, two to cover His face, two to cover His feet and two with which to fly. And they called to one another, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole world is filled with His Glory'" (6:2-3).

The concept of "wings to cover" means that the angels of *Beriyah* conceal and cover the Throne of Glory (*Atzilut* clothed in *Beriyah*), not allowing it to be revealed completely. If the powerful light of *Atzilut* were revealed directly, the prophet would be overwhelmed. Nevertheless, the light of *Atzilut* fills the universe and gives existence to all things by way of this concealment. This is the meaning of "the whole world is filled with His Glory."

Prophecy

As we have seen in our examination of Isaiah, the prophets attained the highest levels of Divine inspiration. They were able to ascend into the spiritual dimension through the inner levels of the soul and climb the ladder that leads to intimate communion with the Divine. They

were also shown how God's Purpose guides creation toward its ultimate destination.[41]

When Moses was on Sinai he reached the highest level of prophecy ever attained. He asked God, "Show me, I beg, Your Glory" (Exodus 33:18). God replied that such perception is beyond the power of any mortal, "You cannot see My Face, for no man can see Me and live" (33:20).

The Ari explains that this refers to a direct vision of the universe of *Atzilut*. Even Moses could not withstand the revelation of the Divine at this level.[42] Nevertheless, Moses is told that there is a way of reaching up to *Atzilut* without being totally nullified: "When My Glory passes by, I will place you in a crevice in the rock, protecting you with My hand until I pass by. I will then remove My hand and you will see My back. My Face, however, shall not be seen" (*ibid.* 33:22-23).[43]

Even in the case of Moses, God's Glory could only be revealed to the extent that he was able to endure it. He could not experience the Glory directly, but only as an image refracted through a brilliantly clear lens.[44] This is the concept of "God's hand" and "God's back" that Moses was able to see. As the Ari explains, Moses perceived *Atzilut*, but only indirectly, as it was refracted into the universe of *Beriyah*. From this vantage point he was shown how all the universes are vehicles of God's ultimate purpose and how this purpose guides and directs all the forces of history in order to bring the entire creation to its intended goal. Moses thus attained the highest level of Divine inspiration ever experienced by a prophet. Once he had been granted this level, knowledge of it could be transmitted to others. This would include the basic structure and dynamics of the spiritual universes as well as the prophetic techniques required for entering the spiritual realm. This knowledge was subsequently embodied in the *Mishkan*-Sanctuary and the *Mikdash*-Temple which were patterned after the blueprint of the supernal universes and which became the focus for all further prophetic experience.[45] The *Mishkan* was built under Moses' personal supervision immediately after his descent from Sinai.[46]

Ezekiel's Vision

Another Biblical source alluding specifically to a vision of the four lower universes is the first chapter of Ezekiel.[47] Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon just prior to the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem. His prophecy was on a lower level than that of Moses and Isaiah, but for this very reason is notably more detailed.[48]

We have mentioned that the prophecy of Moses was on the level

of *Atzilut* refracted in *Beriyah*. For Isaiah, the light of *Atzilut* was completely hidden in the universe of *Beriyah*, the universe of the Throne. Ezekiel's vision of the spiritual dimension was further removed from *Atzilut*. For him, *Atzilut* was concealed in *Beriyah*, when *Beriyah* itself was concealed in *Yetzirah*.[49] It was Ezekiel who saw the "Vision of the Chariot."

The Kabbalists teach that Ezekiel envisioned all four lower universes, but the first and most prominent aspect of his prophecy was the four angels of *Yetzirah* called *Chayot*. The term *Chayot* literally means "living creatures," and the reference is to a certain type of angel particularly associated with God's Providence.[50]

Then, gazing downward, the prophet saw the *Ophanim*, literally the "Wheel Angels" of *Asiyah*. Ezekiel thus says, "I gazed at the *Chayot*, and behold, there was a single *Ophan* on the earth [below] near the *Chayot*" (1:15). Ezekiel's view of *Asiyah* is from above in *Yetzirah* looking down.

The prophet then looks up and sees a firmament over the heads of the *Chayot*. He gazes even higher and describes what he sees: "Above the firmament that was over their heads, like a vision of a sapphire, was the form of a Throne. And over the form of the Throne, there was a form like a vision of a Man, on it from above" (Ezekiel 1:26). Here we are introduced to two new levels, first the Throne and then the Man upon the Throne. The Throne was in the universe of *Beriyah*, one dimension above Ezekiel's vantage point. This is why he says, "the form of a Throne."

Then he sees the "Man" on the Throne. This was Ezekiel's vision of the *Sefirot* in *Atzilut*, two levels removed from his vantage point. It is therefore described as "a form like a vision of a Man." In Hebrew this is *Demut Mareh*, a vision of a vision, the double refraction of an image. As he peered into *Atzilut*, he saw "the vision of the form of God's Glory. I saw it and I fell on my face" (1:28).

To clarify this use of a double refracted image we could use the analogy of a television monitor. It was as if Ezekiel were seeing *Beriyah* through a monitor in *Yetzirah*. On the screen of the monitor in *Beriyah* he saw the image of yet another monitor. This was the "form like a vision" of *Atzilut*.

Atzilut is the universe of the *Sefirot*. In Ezekiel's vision the Man on the Throne represents the anthropomorphic array of the *Sefirot*. The Throne is the Throne of Glory, i.e., the medium through which the powerful light of *Atzilut* is revealed and made available to the prophet's mind.

By itself, *Atzilut* is like a king when he is in his private chambers. No

one can see him. It is only when the king wishes to become accessible to his subjects that he comes out of his room and seats himself on his throne. In the same way, we never see the *Sefirot* in *Atzilut*. In their own realm they are undifferentiated and do not exist as separate concepts. They must be reflected and enclothed in *Beriyah*, the world of pure thought, before we can even conceive of them. Further, to give them names and speak about them, they must be reflected and enclothed in *Yetzirah*, the universe of speech.

Chayot — The Angels of Yetzirah

We have seen that Ezekiel's vision takes place on the level of *Yetzirah*. Thus, his prophecy begins with a vision of the *Chayot* of *Yetzirah*. These *Chayot* constitute the "chariot" that the prophet visualizes. Although the concept of angels is associated with *Beriyah, Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* in general, *Yetzirah* is called the universe of angels.[51]

The Hebrew word for angel is *Malakh* which means literally "messenger," and denotes the concept of transmission. In our previous example, the architect would be sitting in his office while his messengers are going back and forth transmitting his orders to the construction workers. The realm through which the messengers travel is the level of *Yetzirah*.

For this reason, *Yetzirah* is known as the "world of speech." The Talmud states that "Every word emanating from God creates an angel."[52] This means that every one of God's words is actually an angel, a messenger. When we speak of "God's word," we are actually speaking of His interaction with the lower worlds. The force that transverses the spiritual domain is what we call an angel. The realm through which the message is transmitted is *Yetzirah*, the dimension of "spiritual space." Ezekiel thus says, "And the *Chayot* were running and returning like a vision of lightning" (1:14) The *Chayot* perform the function of speech, which is a communication over a distance or across space.

We have already seen that the level of *Ruach* corresponds to the universe of *Yetzirah*. *Ruach*, meaning direction, wind or spirit, implies motion or transference through space. We can thus appreciate the necessity for the last three levels involved here. The idea of giving instructions (*Beriyah*) and of receiving them (*Asiyah*) involves two opposite concepts. In a spiritual sense, this implies distance. Something is needed to bridge the gap between *Beriyah* and *Asiyah*. The angels of *Yetzirah* perform this function.

The Chariot and the Cherubs

Ezekiel's prophecy is referred to as *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, or the "Workings of the Chariot." Talmudic tradition states that this vision is a paradigm of the prophetic experience in general.[53] The term *Ma'aseh Merkavah* used in relation to Ezekiel's vision bears some examination. Actually the term *Merkavah* or Chariot occurs nowhere in the entire book of Ezekiel, and some find the use of this term very puzzling. At first sight, there does not seem to be any connection between this vision and any sort of "Chariot."

One place in the Bible where this word is found in such a context is the verse, "Gold for the pattern of the Chariot (*Merkavah*), the Cherubs" (1 Chronicles 28:18). The word *Merkavah* is used here specifically to describe the Cherubs on the Ark of the Covenant. In the time of the prophets the *Mikdash*-Temple in Jerusalem, particularly the Cherubs on the Ark that stood in the Holy of Holies, was the focal point for all prophetic inspiration.[54] In describing the Ark, God had told Moses, "I will commune with you, and I will speak with you from above the ark-cover from between the Cherubs, which are on the Ark of Testimony" (Exodus 25:22).[55] Each of the Cherubs had the form of a child with wings, and they stood facing each other.[56] In addition, the Cherubs stood on the Ark containing the two stone Tablets, inscribed with the Ten Commandments, as well as the original Torah scroll which Moses himself had written as dictated by God.[57] This indicated that the powerful spiritual force of the Tablets and the Torah scroll was concentrated between the Cherubs. The space between them was also seen as an opening into the spiritual dimension. In concentrating his thoughts between the Cherubs on the Ark, a prophet was able to enter the prophetic state.[58]

Ezekiel's vision took place outside the land of Israel. In addition to this, the Ark and the Cherubs had already been concealed in a labyrinth under the Temple Mount.[59] Nevertheless, the first thing that Ezekiel sees in his vision are the *Chayot*. This fact now becomes the key to our entire discussion. For later in the book of Ezekiel, the prophet himself identifies the *Chayot* seen in his original vision with these Cherubs: "The Cherubs mounted up — this is the *Chayah* that I saw..." (Ezekiel 10:15). Thus, the concept of the Cherub is our link with the Chariot (*Merkavah*). Ezekiel's vision does indeed relate to a "Chariot."

The word *Merkavah* (מרכבה) comes from the root *Rakhav* (רכב). The relationship between the Cherubs and the Chariot is therefore related to the concept expressed in the verse, "God *Rakhav*-rode on a Cherub

and flew. He swooped down on wings of *Ruach*-Spirit" (Psalms 18:11). This is doubly significant when we pay attention to the root of the main words under discussion: *Merkavah* (מרכבה), *Cherub* (כרוב) and *Rakhav* (רכב), meaning "to ride," all have exactly the same letters.

In general, the concept of riding is that of traveling and leaving one's natural place. When the Bible says that God "rides," it means that He leaves His natural state where He is absolutely unknowable and inconceivable, and allows Himself to be visualized by the prophets. The concept of *Merkavah* thus refers to the complete system through which God "leaves His place" and reveals Himself to those who are worthy.

God is further said to "swoop down on wings of *Ruach*." The term "wings," as above in the vision of Isaiah, alludes to coverings, meaning that God covers and conceals His Glory, not revealing it completely, since if He did so, the prophet would be overwhelmed and blinded. The spiritual medium through which the vision is granted is *Ruach*, the dimension of speech and communication corresponding to the universe of *Yetzirah*.

Ophanim — The Angels of Asiyah

The universe of *Asiyah* includes the physical world and its spiritual counterpart.[60] In the human soul, *Asiyah* corresponds to the level of *Nefesh* which is where the spiritual actually interacts with the physical. The angels of *Asiyah* are the *Ophanim* or "Wheels" and these are the *Ophanim* that Ezekiel saw under the Chariot.

In order to understand this correspondence we must contemplate the function of wheels in general. Wheels reduce friction between a vehicle and the ground. Without wheels it would drag heavily on the ground, wearing itself out and tearing the road apart. Wheels, therefore, allow for the smooth interface between the chassis and the ground.

The angels of *Asiyah*, the *Ophanim*, provide a smooth interface between the spiritual and the physical. In Ezekiel's vision of the *Merkavah*, the Chariot itself is the universe of *Yetzirah*, the realm of spiritual movement. The *Ophanim* of *Asiyah* represent the interaction of the spiritual dimension with the physical world.

In Ezekiel's vision, it is written, "Behold, there is one *Ophan* on the earth" (Ezekiel 1:15). The Talmud says that this *Ophan* is Sandalphon.[61] As his name indicates, he is the *Ophan* of the *Sandal*, the "shoe-angel." A shoe is also an interface between the foot and the ground. Sandalphon thus bridges the gap between the spiritual and the physical.

It is said of Sandalphon that he goes to every synagogue, collects the

prayers being said there and carries them to God's Throne.[62] In other words, he takes physical words (*Asiyah*) and brings them into the spiritual realm (*Beriyah*). This may also be related to the Talmud's comparison of the world to a spinning wheel which sometimes elevates what is lowly and lowers what is high.[63] Thus, just as a wheel moves in a circular motion, constantly rising up and lowering down, the *Ophan* raises the physical up to the spiritual and brings down spiritual illumination into the physical. In addition, the motion of the "wheels" of *Asiyah* is perpetual, the relationship between the spiritual and the physical always being a dynamic one. Based on our actions, God is constantly changing events. This interplay is continual; it is never interrupted.

Divine Providence

A computer system can provide us with an analogy to the constant interplay between the spiritual and the physical. The programmer sitting at the console corresponds to the "Man" of *Atzilut*. The CPU, Central Processing Unit, is the brain and memory bank of the computer, corresponding to *Beriyah*, the world of thought. Suppose that the computer is programmed to control traffic lights throughout a large metropolitan area. Transmission lines would then be coming out of the CPU, connecting it to traffic lights all over the city. These transmission lines correspond to the universe of *Yetzirah*. The traffic lights themselves are the peripheral equipment. These lights correspond to the world of *Asiyah*, controlling traffic in the physical world.

We mentioned that the relationship between the physical and the spiritual is always dynamic. Accordingly, God's providential direction of the universe never ceases. He is always acting in the world, guiding events based on our actions.[64] In effect, therefore, this is a "two-way" process with a built-in feedback loop to allow for changes in programming. On the one hand, God is directing an ongoing input into the universe, irregardless of our actions. On the other hand, God looks at what we do, judges it, and puts into the universe what He decides is appropriate relative to what we do.[65]

In our model of the computer, the peripheral equipment will also contain this feedback loop. On the one hand, the traffic lights are programmed to control traffic automatically. On the other, sensors will record traffic flow. For example, if the traffic on one street is blocked, the sensors will detect this, giving rise to a green-light command from the CPU to get the traffic flowing again.

It is always a two-way process. Let us say we are driving into a large city like Manhattan. If the sensors are detecting the possibility

of a massive traffic jam in midtown Manhattan, the computer may close off all the bridges leading into the city. Thousands of cars and trucks will be prevented from crossing these bridges and will consider it a terrible catastrophe. Yet, unless they get a special report on their radios, they will not realize that drastic measures had to be taken in order to divert the possibility of an inner city gridlock.

What does the computer do when it detects a car going through red lights at a reckless speed? Since the chance of a serious traffic accident rises exponentially in such a case, the nearest patrol cars will be alerted and summoned into immediate action. Sometimes, then, to prevent a greater tragedy, the computer might have to take unpleasant measures.[66] Essentially the computer is programmed to make traffic flow as smooth and safe as possible. The feedback loop is essential in this process.

All this comes under the general heading of what we call Divine Providence or *Hashgachah*. It is what we mean when we say that God is "King of the Universe." His providence is constantly at work, guiding the world toward its goal.

The major task of perfecting the world belongs to man. The Psalmist said, "The heavens belong to God, but the earth He gave to the sons of man" (Psalms 115:16). It is man's responsibility to use his God-given free will for good and thus bring about a world conforming to God's master plan. In so doing, he becomes a partner with God and is thus able to partake of His ultimate goodness.

As we have seen, the bond between God and man involves all levels of creation. Man is the goal of God's creation, and all the spiritual worlds exist only for his sake. For God created the world in such a way that it remains incomplete unless man fulfills his purpose. The main responsibility to complete God's plan lies in man's hands.[67]

This does not mean that God leaves things to chance. Although He gave individuals free will, He still influences the large scale course of history. Even though He does not determine the conduct of individuals, the collective wills of nations and societies are largely determined by God. This is what the Bible means when it says, "As streams of water, the king's heart is in God's hand. He turns it wherever He wills" (Proverbs 21:1).[68] If a stream is deflected even a little, it can take an entirely different course. Similarly, a slight change of mind on the part of a ruler can have a major impact on the course of history.[69]

God also guides the destiny of each individual to fulfill His purpose. Man might have free will, but God interacts with him to bring about His goal. He thus might place an individual in a certain predicament, cause

him to meet a propitious friend, or otherwise give him opportunities to act in a way that helps lead the world toward God's ultimate goal.[70]

The ultimate goal of the historic process is the perfection of society as a vehicle for God's goodness. This goal is what we call the Messianic Age, and it is the focus of the entire historical process. It is one of the basic beliefs of Judaism and gives us complete optimism in the ultimate future of mankind.

In our analogy of the computer, we mentioned that the programmer is sitting at the console in *Atzilut* receiving feedback from *Asiyah*. It is only the program, however, which reacts to the information being sent back. We know that God Himself, His Will and His Master Plan are not affected by man's actions. This might sound like man's actions are of little consequence. The opposite, however, is the case. God's overall plan is to bring mankind to an ultimate perfection. Nothing can prevent this. It is, however, in man's hands to decide how he will reach the goal.

In a way, the situation is very much analogous to the game of a master chess player. Although his opponent has complete free will, the master knows how to counter each move, and thus bring the game to any conclusion he desires. Using this analogy, we can say that God is the ultimate Master, and His game involves all mankind. The stakes are the ultimate triumph of good itself.

Chapter 4: THE SEFIROT

> "Ten Sefirot of nothingness, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven" (*Sefer Yetzirah* 1:4)

Ten and not nine ...

The *Sefirot* are the most basic modes of God's creative power. The *Sefirot* thus constitute the inner structure and makeup of the *Olamot*-Universes. It is through the *Sefirot* that God interacts with the universe. They are the bridge between God and His creation. Nothing in the universe takes place except through the medium of the *Sefirot*. The *Sefirot*, however, are not God.[1] From the point of view of God, even the *Sefirot* are *Beli-Mah*, "nothingness," or literally "without anything."

The *Sefirot* are reflected in man, and in this way, man partakes of the Divine.[2] The Kabbalists say that the most basic qualities of human emotionality are love and fear.[3] Together they enable man to interact meaningfully with the world around him. These qualities, as well as all the other traits that derive from them, are a reflection of the qualities that God uses in running His universe. They correspond to seven of the Ten *Sefirot*: *Chesed*-Love, *Gevurah*-Restraint, *Tiferet*-Beauty, *Netzach*-Dominance, *Hod*-Empathy, *Yesod*-Foundation (Channel) and *Malkhut*-Kingship.

Man's mental faculties, as well, are a reflection of the same Intellect that God used to create the universe. This means that man has the ability to fathom the fundamental laws and logic of creation. These faculties correspond to the two higher *Sefirot*, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding.[4]

The highest faculty in man, however, is will. It is with his will that he ultimately decides how he will think, feel or act. It is with his will that he is able to rise above all internal pressures or external circumstances. Man's will is thus said to correspond to the highest of the Ten *Sefirot*, *Keter*-Crown.[5]

If one were to attempt to describe God, it would be tempting to say that He is pure Will. This would be very much like saying that God is "spirit," or that He is "love," since all such descriptions attempt to depict God in terms of human traits. If any human trait were to

be used, however, it would be "will," since this is the underlying basis of all human faculties.[6]

This is the meaning of what the *Sefer Yetzirah* says when it states that the *Sefirot* are "ten and not nine." For if we were to say that God is Will, then *Keter*-Crown would be identical to God, and only nine *Sefirot* would remain. But since there are ten *Sefirot*, then even Will is nothing more than a *Sefirah*, and is greatly inferior to the Creator.

The *Sefer Yetzirah* also warns, "ten and not eleven." This is to teach that God Himself, the Infinite Being, is not to be included among the *Sefirot*. If He were, then there would be eleven rather than ten.[7]

Anthropomorphisms

In many places the Bible speaks of God as if He had a human body or shared human traits. In countless verses we find such expressions as "the eyes of God,"[8] "the ears of God,"[9] and "the hand of God."[10] God is said to see, hear, smell, speak and walk. Will, wisdom, truth, goodness, mercy, justice, strength, and even emotions such as joy and anger are ascribed to God. In all these cases, the Bible uses anthropomorphic terms to describe God. Since God has no physical form and He cannot be thought of in physical terms, what do all these anthropomorphisms mean?

The simple explanation of why we use anthropomorphisms is that "God borrows terms from His creatures to express His relationship to the world."[11] God can only speak to us in a language we understand and we therefore have a rule: "The Torah speaks in the language of man."[12] This means that a physical allegory may be used to express a very profound philosophical relationship between God and His creation. Thus, for example, when the Bible speaks of "God's eyes," it is alluding to the fact that He is aware of everything that happens in the world. When it speaks of "God's hand," it is speaking of His expression of power and of His Providence in guiding the world's destiny. Similarly, when it speaks of God's "joy" or "anger," it is ascribing the same emotions to Him as we ourselves would feel if we were doing the same thing. None of these expressions, however, is meant to imply that God has any body or form, or that God will change His mind or His feelings from one moment to the next. They are merely spoken in allegory, relating to His power and action as we experience them.[13]

Of course, this explanation is based on the fact that we cannot say anything about God Himself. As Creator of all things, God is absolutely different from anything that exists. God exists outside of time and,

therefore, we cannot apply any concepts of change to Him.[14] God does not partake of anything worldly, and we therefore cannot apply any physical qualities to Him. He may use various qualities in running His universe, but we must say that He is far more than the sum total of all of them. Even such lofty things as love, truth and justice are ultimately created concepts which cannot exist except within the context of a human society. When we look to God, however, we see Him on a much higher plane than any of these things.[15]

On the other hand, in describing the creation of man, the Torah says, "God created man in His image. In the image of God He created him, male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). Many Jewish commentators interpret this and similar statements allegorically, saying, for instance, that man resembles God to the extent that he has intellectual powers and acts with free will like God.[16] For what kind of "image" can we ascribe to God? And how can we say that He is male or female or both?

When we remember, however, that God created a spiritual dimension in order to reveal Himself to man, such an expression takes on a completely new significance. For now, God's "image" does not refer to God Himself who is completely beyond all description. It refers to the basic conceptual model or structure that underlies all creation. It refers to the *Sefirot*.

It is the *Sefirot* that make it possible for an infinite and transcendental God to interact with His creation.[17] For they allow us to speak about God's immanence in creation, what He *does*, without referring directly to what He *is*.[18] It is in this sense that the *Sefirot* are the keys to the precise meaning behind the anthropomorphisms of the Bible, for they tell us about God's actions. And it is in this sense that man was created in "the image of God." For man is thus seen as a microcosm of God's creative powers. Man is a microcosm of the *Sefirot*.[19]

This explains why the prophets envisioned certain anthropomorphic depictions of the *Sefirot* only after they were warned that God is completely divorced from all visualization.[20] They were then able to turn around and speak of God as if He thought, felt and acted like a human being. These anthropomorphisms were in no way meant to refer to God Himself, but to the way in which we experience God as immanent in His creation.[21]

This also explains how Kabbalists depicted the *Sefirot* as corresponding to various limbs and functions of the human body. For it is the human body, patterned after the anthropomorphic array of the *Sefirot*, that serves as a perfect paradigm of extremely varied forces working in

synchronized balance and harmony. In the body, all senses and all biological systems are differentiated, on the one hand, and completely interdependent, on the other. In addition, man's physical well-being has a noticeable effect on his thoughts and emotions and vice versa. In the same way, each *Sefirah* is a specific power or mode through which God governs and sustains His universe.[22] At the same time, each *Sefirah* functions in perfect harmony with every other *Sefirah*, and contains within itself aspects of all the *Sefirot*.[23]

Ultimately, the *Sefirot* are not God. They do, however, allow us to speak of God's immanence in the world and describe Him in terms of this relationship. It is only through the medium of the *Sefirot* that specific qualities and attributes can be ascribed to Him. It is also through the *Sefirot* that God constricts His light and gives man the ability to receive the ultimate gift of existence from Him.

The Essence of the Sefirot

The *Sefirot* are generally referred to as *Midot*, which means literally "measures" or "dimensions," and by extension, attributes or qualities.[24] It is through the *Sefirot* that God limits His infinite essence and manifests specific qualities that His creatures can grasp and relate to. As such, the *Sefirot* act variously as filters, garments or vessels for the light of *Ain Sof* that fills them.

The term *Sefirah* (סְפִירָה) itself derives or is related to the Hebrew *Saper* (סָפַר), meaning "to express" or "communicate," and *Sapir* (סַפִּיר), "sapphire," "brilliance" or "luminary." It is also related to *Safar* (סָפָר), meaning "number," *Sefar* (סְפָר), "boundary," and *Sefer* (סֵפֶר), "book."[25] In essence, all of these are related concepts and point to the *Sefirot* as having two basic functions. First, the *Sefirot* are *Orot*, Lights or Luminaries that serve to reveal and express God's greatness. Secondly, they are *Kelim*, Vessels that limit and delineate God's infinite light, bringing it into the finite realm of number and boundary.

This distinction answers a basic question dealt with by the Kabbalists. Are the *Sefirot* essences of the Divine or are they vessels of the Divine?[26] In other words, are the *Sefirot* ten windows through which we can perceive the Divine or are they ten tools that God uses to direct the world? The Ari answers that both are true on different levels.[27]

As mentioned, the *Sefirot* belong essentially to the realm of *Atzilut*-Nearness. In *Atzilut*, they are in a completely undifferentiated state. It is for this reason that the *Sefer Yetzirah* refers to them as the Ten *Sefirot* of Nothingness. Indeed, it is in their *Atzilut*-aspect that the *Sefirot* can be characterized as ten clear Lights or windows through

which the *Ain Sof* illuminates the rest of creation. In *Atzilut*, however, the *Sefirot* are totally abstract and ineffable. They can only be described in terms of themselves and we therefore cannot know of their essence. It is only when they are refracted into the universe of *Beriyah*-Creation that we can even think about them. And before we can give them names and speak about them as separate tools of God's creative power, they must be refracted twice into the universe of *Yetzirah*-Formation. Finally, in *Asiyah*-Action, the *Sefirot* represent God's basic interaction with man and the physical dimension.

Thus, the basic concepts of the *Sefirot* come into existence in *Atzilut*, but become more manifest at the lower levels of the spiritual dimension. This means that the inner structure of each universe consists of the same Ten *Sefirot*. As the process of constriction reaches greater and greater degrees of concealment of God's light, the *Sefirot* become more revealed as separate Vessels of the Divine. For it is only through this step-down process that God's light becomes accessible to us and, in turn, allows us to reach up and communicate with the Infinite *Ain Sof*.[28]

The Array of the Sefirot

The Ten *Sefirot* are often depicted in an anthropomorphic array paralleling the human head and body. This division is based on the fact that the highest *Sefirot* represent internal or "mental" processes, while the lower *Sefirot* manifest these processes externally. Thus, when referring to this division, the seven lower *Sefirot* are still called *Midot*-Attributes, while the three highest *Sefirot* are referred to as *Mochin*-Mentalities.[29] We find a hint of this in the *Tikuney Zohar*. Here, the *Sefirot* are presented in an anthropomorphic array which indicates their respective positions in relation to one another. The *Tikuney Zohar* begins by describing the lower seven *Midot*:[30]

> *Chesed*-Love (1) is the right arm,
> *Gevurah*-Restraint (2) is the left,
> *Tiferet*-Beauty (3) is the body;
> *Netzach*-Dominance (4) and *Hod*-Empathy (5)
> are the two legs,
> *Yesod*-Foundation (6) is the body's extremity,
> the sign of the holy covenant;
> *Malkhut*-Kingship (7) is the mouth ...

Here we are introduced to the seven most basic forces of creation, the lower seven of the Ten *Sefirot*. *Chesed*-Love[31] is the right arm

or hand, *Gevurah*-Restraint[32] is the left. *Tiferet*-Beauty is the body itself that lies between the two upper extremities. Together, these three *Sefirot* constitute a triad. Hence, whenever the Bible speaks of God using His "right hand" to bless man or bestow His bounty on Him, even if his actions do not merit it, it denotes the *Sefirah* of *Chesed.* When it speaks of God's "left hand" it is referring to the *Sefirah* of *Gevurah* whereby God restrains His love in order to judge man solely on the basis of his actions. Thus, *Chesed*-Love represents an unconditional "giving," while *Gevurah*-Restraint represents an aspect of limitation *vis a vis* man's ability to receive God's love. *Tiferet*-Beauty is the combination of the two primary powers of *Chesed* and *Gevurah.* For this reason, *Tiferet* is seen as the body itself, for it denotes the perfect harmony of Love and Restraint.

Netzach-Dominance,[33] *Hod*-Empathy[34] and *Yesod*-Foundation constitute a similar triad. *Netzach*-Dominance is the right leg, and like *Chesed*, the right arm, denotes an active overcoming of limitations and obstacles. *Hod*-Empathy is the left leg, and like *Gevurah*, the left arm, denotes extreme consideration for others or passive submission.[35] The word *Hod* (הוד) shares the same root as *LeHodot* (להודות) and denotes the ability "to thank" even in the event of misfortune, or "to admit" and acquiesce in the face of an obstacle. *Yesod*-Foundation[36] lies between these two, and again, denotes a balance between the agressiveness of *Netzach* and the passive acquiescence of *Hod.*

While the six *Sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod* are masculine, *Malkhut*-Kingship is a feminine *Sefirah.* As we shall see, these six *Sefirot* parallel the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton, whereas *Malkhut*-Kingship parallels the last *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton.

The six masculine *Sefirot* are thus seen as the basic powers to give and create, while the feminine *Malkhut* represents the power to receive. The six *Sefirot* are related to the six days of creation. They also represent the six basic directions of the three-dimensional physical universe — north-south, east-west, up-down. They represent the fundamental modes of reaching out to the six directions of creation.[37]

The seventh *Sefirah*, *Malkhut*-Kingship, is likened to the womb of the female. It represents the power to receive, hold, and eventually give back something more perfect and complete. It is therefore related to the seventh day of creation, the Sabbath. It is the Sabbath which gives us the power to hold on to the original masculine forces of creation and integrate them into our lives. *Malkhut* is also the axis or focal point at the center of the six directions, where instead of looking outward, we look inward and integrate spiritual illumination into ourselves.

The six masculine *Sefirot* are also represented by six major personalities in the Torah. *Chesed*-Love is the attribute of Abraham, *Gevurah*-Restraint is the attribute of Isaac, and *Tiferet*-Beauty is the attribute of Jacob. *Netzach*-Dominance is the attribute of Moses, *Hod*-Empathy is the attribute of Aaron the Priest, and *Yesod*-Foundation is the attribute of Joseph.[38]

The seventh *Sefirah* is represented in the life of David. It was King David who blended the six masculine *Sefirot* into himself and was therefore chosen to personify the feminine *Sefirah* of *Malkhut*-Kingship. He was able to praise God as the ultimate source of all power in the universe. It is therefore not by chance that the one verse in the Bible that contains explicit mention of all seven of the lower *Sefirot* was said by King David: "Yours, O God, are the [loving] greatness (1), the restraint (2), the beauty (3), the dominance (4), and the empathy (5) for all that is in heaven and earth (6); Yours, O God, is the Kingdom (7) and You are exalted as head above all... For power and restraint are in Your (left) hand, [loving] greatness and encouragement in Your (right) hand" (1 Chronicles 29:11-12).[39] These were among the last words that David spoke before his death. He thus taught that man's consummate achievement in life is the acknowledgment that God is the source of all these powers. With this realization he becomes an embodiment of the *Sefirot* and truly resembles his Creator.

The *Tikuney Zohar* continues and describes the three Mentalities:

> *Chokhmah*-Wisdom is the (right) brain, the seat of thought, *Binah*-Understanding is the heart, the power of the heart to understand. Concerning these, it is written: "The hidden things belong to the Lord our God" (Deuteronomy 29:28). *Keter Elyon*-Supernal Crown is the *Keter*-Crown of *Malkhut*-Kingship, concerning which it is said, "I [God] declare the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10).

Here we are introduced to the upper triad of the Ten *Sefirot*: *Keter*-Crown, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding. The word *Keter* means literally "crown," and alludes to the transcendental nature of the first *Sefirah* which, like a crown, rests on top of the head, or like the cranium encases and surrounds the brain.[40] *Keter* therefore transcends *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, and is their source. It is the level of Primal Cause that precedes all creative activity.

God created the world with infinite wisdom. The Bible says as much

when it states, "How great are Your works, God. You made them all with *Chokhmah*-Wisdom" (Psalms 104:24). In addition, wisdom is always associated with the concept of "beginning," in particular with the beginning of God's creative work.[41] There is, however, something that must come even before wisdom. This is the level of *Keter*-Crown that precedes *Chokhmah* and is the very first ingredient of creation.

In speaking of the *Olamot*-Universes, we referred to the profound concept of God's Will. We said that *Adam Kadmon* refers to the primordial will which initiated and sustains everything in existence. In terms of the *Sefirot*, this same concept is called *Keter Elyon*, the Supernal Crown.[42] *Keter* represents the primordial will and desire to create a world for man.

In addition, *Keter* represents the final purpose and goal towards which creation is headed. It therefore alludes to the concept of "the end" that is embedded in the beginning. We can understand this if we think of "Will" as the primary *Cause*, and "Purpose" as its final *Effect*. The *Sefirah* of *Keter*-Crown unites these two poles of existence.

Thus, in discussing the level of *Adam Kadmon*, we referred to the phrase, "The complete action is in the first thought."[43] The same idea is repeated in terms of the *Sefirot*. The *Sefer Yetzirah* states, "Their end is embedded in their beginning and their beginning is embedded in their end."[44] This is exactly what the *Tikuney Zohar* means when it says that "*Keter Elyon* is the *Keter*-Crown of *Malkhut*-Kingship," thus connecting the idea of Will and Purpose, and creating the ultimate Cause-Effect relationship. This in turn is based on God's statement through His prophet, "I declare the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10).

Just as *Keter*-Crown parallels the skull, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding are likened to the two hemispheres of the brain.[45] Together, *Chokhmah* and *Binah* are called "the hidden things," because, as mental processes, their effects are only visible when externalized by the seven lower *Midot*.[46] On a Divine level, *Chokhmah* and *Binah* are thus seen as the processes that precede the actual seven days of creation. This is alluded to in the verse "With wisdom God founded the earth, with understanding He established the heavens and with His knowledge the depths are broken up" (Proverbs 3:19-20). It is also written, "With wisdom a house is built, with understanding it is established, and with knowledge its rooms are filled" (*ibid.* 24:3-4). Similarly, in recording the qualifications of Betzalel, the man chosen to build the *Mishkan*-Sanctuary according to the pattern of the supernal universes, God says, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with

wisdom, understanding and knowledge" (Exodus 31:3). We see here that the spiritual blueprint for all creative activity originates in these higher *Sefirot*.[47]

All of these sources refer explicitly to three qualities: wisdom, understanding and knowledge. As we shall see, when we discuss the *Sefirah* of *Keter*, *Da'at*-Knowledge functions in many ways as a quasi-*Sefirah* and is thus often included among the *Sefirot* in place of *Keter*. It is, however, not counted among the Ten *Sefirot* when *Keter* is manifest.[48]

Sefirot and Anthropomorphic Representations

Sefirot	*Physical Representation*	*Conceptual Representation*
Keter-Crown	skull, cranium	Will, Purpose
Chokhmah-Wisdom	right brain	Mind, Axioms
Binah-Understanding	left brain, heart	Logic
[*Da'at*-Knowledge]	[middle brain, spine]	[Connection]
Chesed-Love	right arm/hand	Giving
Gevurah-Restraint	left arm/hand	Justice, Strength
Tiferet-Beauty	body, torso	Harmony, Truth
Netzach-Dominance	right leg/kidney/testicle	Victory, Endurance
Hod-Empathy	left leg/kidney/testicle	Submission, Majesty
Yesod-Foundation	sexual organ	Covenant, Channel
Malkhut-Kingship	mouth, crown of organ, mate	Receiving, Reciprocity

The Five-Dimensional Universe

The *Sefer Yetzirah* speaks of the Ten *Sefirot* as ten directions that constitute the totality of existence. These ten directions define a path to the Infinite Being who is beyond His creation. Although God is a King who interacts with His subjects, He Himself is in no way influenced by them. This is particularly true of God's relationship to the *Sefirot*. He is in no way affected or defined by them. Thus, the *Sefer Yetzirah* states:[49]

> Ten *Sefirot* of Nothingness:
> Their measure is ten; they have no end.
> A depth of beginning, a depth of end,
> A depth of good, a depth of evil,
> A depth of above, a depth of below,

A depth of east, a depth of west,
A depth of north, a depth of south,
The Singular Master; God, Faithful King,
Dominates over them all from His holy dwelling,
Until eternity of eternities.

Here the *Sefer Yetzirah* defines a five-dimensional continuum with ten directions, two opposite directions in each dimension. We have seen that the three-dimensional physical universe consists of six directions, north-south, east-west and up-down. The fourth dimension, that of time, consists of two directions, past and future, or beginning and end. Finally, there is the fifth, spiritual or moral dimension, whose directions are good and evil.

Each of these directions is said to be infinite and endless, and they are referred to as depths: "a depth of beginning, a depth of end, a depth of good, a depth of evil..." In general, the concept of depth indicates something at a great distance, as when one looks down a deep well, gazing at its "depth." It therefore denotes great distance, both physical and mental. Thus, an idea that is difficult to understand, and far from man's comprehension, is also said to be deep.

There are many examples of this in scripture. We thus find, "The heavens for height, the earth for depth, and the heart of kings has no probing" (Proverbs 25:3). Regarding Wisdom, King Solomon said, "It is deep, deep, who can find it" (Ecclesiastes 7:24). In particular, the concept of "depth" is used in relation to the Divine, as in, "How great are Your works, God, Your thoughts are very deep" (Psalms 92:6). The ten depths therefore represent the ten directions extended to infinity.

According to the later Kabbalists, these ten depths parallel the Ten *Sefirot* in the following manner:[50]

Keter-Crown	A depth of Good
Chokhmah-Wisdom	A depth of Beginning
Binah-Understanding	A depth of End
Chesed-Love	A depth of South
Gevurah-Restraint	A depth of North
Tiferet-Beauty	A depth of East
Netzach-Dominance	A depth of Above
Hod-Empathy	A depth of Below
Yesod-Foundation	A depth of West
Malkhut-Kingship	A depth of Evil

When divided according to this system, the Ten *Sefirot* are thus seen as consisting of five sets of opposites.

Keter-Crown is the "depth of good," since it is the *Sefirah* closest to God. For the same reason, *Malkhut*, the last *Sefirah*, is the "depth of evil." This does not mean that *Malkhut* itself is actually evil, since all the *Sefirot* are completely and absolutely good. Since *Malkhut* points in the direction away from God, however, it is said to denote the direction of evil. In addition, *Malkhut* parallels the last *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton and represents the "hand that receives." *Malkhut* therefore must be a receiver of good. Hence, it is only evil in the sense of being the absence of good.

Since *Keter*-Crown is on a level beyond comprehension, the highest actual level that can be perceived is *Chokhmah*-Wisdom. For this reason, *Keter*-Crown is also referred to as "Eternity," the infinite time that the human mind cannot penetrate or fathom. *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding, on the other hand, represent the beginning and end of time, the depth of the past and the depth of the future. Like the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom represents the undifferentiated potential of existence that God wishes to give. *Binah*-Understanding, corresponding to the *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, is the "Hand" that defines existence or, in this case, the future that holds what the past gives to it.

Finally, at the interface between past and future is the three-dimensional space continuum consisting of six directions and represented by the letter *Vav*. Together with the fourth temporal dimension and the fifth spiritual dimension, the result is a five-dimensional universe represented by all four letters of the Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*.

Only after describing the five dimensional continuum defined by the *Sefirot* does the *Sefer Yetzirah* refer to God as the "Singular Master." The Hebrew for "singular" here is *Yachid*, indicating a complete and absolute unity.

The unity of God is absolute. He is not like a person who consists of many parts. He is not even like the most simple physical object, since even such an object has three dimensions. To say that God is bound by dimensions would in itself introduce an element of plurality in His essence, and this is excluded.

After the *Sefer Yetzirah* has defined the five-dimensional continuum, one might be misled to think that God Himself is a five-dimensional being. The text therefore stresses His unity. The concept of dimensionality does not apply to God at all. He may relate to the universe as a "Faithful King," but He Himself is completely above our grasp. The

expression "eternity of eternities" thus denotes a domain that is beyond even timelessness.

The next few chapters are an attempt to depict each *Sefirah* by itself, as well as in relation to the other nine. All being said, however, any description of the *Sefirot* is derivative, and not a description of their essence. Yet, in high levels of meditation, one can experience a *Sefirah*, and unless one does, it is impossible to explain its meaning.

Chapter 5: KETER

Keter and Malkhut

Keter is the first and highest of the ten *Sefirot* and represents God's absolute sovereignty and authority over all the forces of creation. This sovereignty, however, is too powerful for creation to withstand or comprehend. It is only in *Malkhut*-Kingship, the last *Sefirah*, that it is expressed in a way that creation can benefit from it. It is only in *Malkhut* that the abstract potential of *Keter* becomes manifest and actualized. All the other *Sefirot* that are in between these two poles of existence are there only to bring the authority of *Keter*-Crown into full play in *Malkhut*-Kingship.

The relationship between *Keter* and *Malkhut* is reflected in yet another manner. *Keter* is *Ain*-Nothingness as well as *Ani*-Selfhood. The same is true of *Malkhut*.[1] This can be understood in the following way. The most primary relationship that can exist between Creator and creation is the Cause-Effect relationship. When something acts as a cause, it is referred to as *Ani*. When the same cause is seen as an effect of some higher cause, it is referred to as *Ain*. Thus, when looking up to its source in *Ain Sof*, *Keter* is nullified and no longer has an independent existence. As such, *Keter* partakes of the *Ain* of *Ain Sof*. When looking down to the other *Sefirot*, however, *Keter* is the beginning and cause of independent existence. It is therefore referred to as *Ani*.[2]

The attribute of *Malkhut* expresses God's causal relationship with His creation and is therefore usually referred to as *Ani*. But since *Malkhut* is the ultimate effect, and an empty vessel whose existence depends entirely on the *Sefirot* above it, it is also called *Ain*-Nothingness.[3]

This has very important implications on the human level. The Hebrew word for "I" is *Ani* (אני). It is significant that if the letters of *Ani* are rearranged, they spell the word *Ain* (אין), which denotes "nothingness." This would seem to imply that the real "me" is the "nothingness" within me.

In order to understand this properly, it might be helpful to reiterate the difference between a nothingness which is ineffable and a nothingness which implies non-existence. We have noted that in classical Kabbalah, the highest spiritual levels are referred to as *Ain*-Nothingness. It is in this context that the universe of *Atzilut* and everything above it is referred to as *Ain*. The same principle applies to *Keter*-Crown among

the *Sefirot*. With regard to *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, the second highest *Sefirah*, it is written, "Wisdom comes from *Ain* (Nothingness)" (Job 28:12). This means that *Keter*-Crown, the level from which *Chokhmah*-Wisdom emanates, is called "Nothingness."[4] While *Atzilut* in general is nothingness in a conceptual sense, *Keter*, the highest of the *Sefirot* in *Atzilut*, is nothingness in even a spiritual sense.[5]

This is also suggested by the term *Ain Sof* itself, which literally means "without" (*Ain*) and "end" (*Sof*). On a deeper level, however, the term *Ain Sof* is the ultimate "negative attribute" that can be ascribed to God Himself.[6] It therefore not only implies that God is unlike and incomparable to any "something" that exists, but that all "somethingness" is nullified in His Presence.[7] If anything, God is the "Absolute *Yesh*-Something" in front of whom all existence ceases to exist. Nevertheless, from our point of view, the closest we can come to conceiving God's Essence is to know what He is not. In this sense, the term *Ain Sof* also has the connotation of "the Ultimate Nothingness." Thus, the Kabbalists use the term "nothingness" as it applies to "something" which not only cannot be described, but which is totally beyond our conception and ineffable.

When we then use the word *Ain*-Nothingness to describe the essence of a human being created in the image of God, we refer to the ultimate "I" that cannot be known. It is the intangible source of my will that impels me to do whatever I decide. It is higher than thought itself, for it is obvious that it is the "I" that tells my mind to think. It is because the source of my will is on a level beyond thought that it is impossible to imagine it. There is simply no category in my mind into which it will fit. Therefore when I try to imagine the source of my will, the real "me," all I can depict is nothingness. From this point of view, all the other attributes of the human personality are not the real *Ani*, but can be defined more properly as my "ego."

The word "ego" is rooted in the Greek concept of the "I" which can be characterized as the sum total of psychic functions that define a person's relationship with himself and the world. If these ego functions do not look to their source in the *Ani*, they merely stand in the way of one's growth and development as a person. If, however, they are garments or expressions of the *Ani*, as the *Sefirot* from *Chokhmah* to *Malkhut* are expressions of *Keter*, then the basic ingredient of self, the will, can also connect to its source, the Divine Will. The more a person can identify with the true *Ani-Ain*, the more he is in touch with the Divine within himself.

Ultimately this involves drawing the spiritual into the physical

dimension and integrating the highest levels of consciousness into a person's life. Man thus truly resembles God when, after transcending his own selfhood and recognizing that his very essence is somehow one with God, he realizes that existence itself is an awesome gift of love and kindness that he must share with others. For just as God is immanent in His creation and constantly bringing the world towards its ultimate perfection, man's true purpose is to do the same. When he connects his will to God's will, his potential for transforming the world into a heavenly *Malkhut*-Kingdom is unlimited.

The Hidden Sefirah

The Kabbalists point out that the Ten *Sefirot* parallel the Ten Sayings with which the world was created.[8] In discussing these Ten Sayings, the Talmud notes that the expression "And God said" appears only nine times in the first chapter of Genesis.[9] The problem is then, where is the Tenth Saying?

The *Midrash* points out that the second chapter of Genesis also contains a saying, "And God said, It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:28).[10] Objecting, however, that all Ten Sayings should appear in the first chapter, the Talmud concludes that the expression, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), is also a saying. Yet, since this saying is not introduced by the expression "And God said," it is considered a *Ma'amar Satum*, a "closed" or "hidden" saying.[11]

A similar discussion revolves around the first of the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt" (Exodus 20:1). Most authorities interpret this as an actual command to believe in God.[12] As such, it is the first and foremost commandment.

There are other authorities, however, who go a step further. They write that belief in God is much too basic a part of Judaism to be a mere commandment.[13] Rather, they see this as an introduction to the commandments, and a statement that forms the very basis of Judaism. In this sense, like the first saying of Genesis, the first commandment is subject to a certain ambiguity. In terms of the *Sefirot*, this same ambiguity is apparent with regard to *Keter*-Crown.[14]

As the highest *Sefirah*, *Keter* is the interface between the Infinite *Ain Sof* and the creation. It is completely hidden and incomprehensible and partakes of the very quality of infinity that makes it impossible to speak about *Ain Sof* itself. Like a crown that rests on top of the head, it is not part of the "body." Indeed, it is for this very

reason that *Keter* is sometimes not included among the ten *Sefirot*. Owing to its utter ineffability, it is beyond the grasp of even the highest *Sefirot* below it. The sefirotic array is then said to begin with *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding. In place of *Keter*, the quasi-*Sefirah Da'at*-Knowledge is included.

The simplest way of understanding this exclusion of *Keter* is in terms of the creation of the *Olamot*-Universes. *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, for example, represents what could be called pure, undifferentiated mind. It is pure thought which has not yet been broken up into differentiated concepts or ideas. At the level of *Chokhmah* we find the most basic axioms of existence in a kind of pristine unity.

Binah-Understanding is the level immediately below *Chokhmah*-Wisdom. It represents the power of diffusion, the ability to scrutinize and make logical distinctions. In this sense, *Binah* is the system of logic by which the basic axioms of *Chokhmah* are delineated and defined.

Da'at-Knowledge would then follow *Chokhmah* and *Binah*. *Da'at* could be called "applied logic." It is the ability to bring together the basic information that is given (*Chokhmah*) and make it interplay logically (*Binah*).

Together, *Chokhmah*, *Binah* and *Da'at* constitute the basic mental processes that underlie all creative expression. As much as they represent the most abstract level of mind, however, they are merely derivatives of a primal impulse of will that is far more subtle and abstract and that transcends the axioms and the logic of creation.

Keter-Crown is the very basis of creation. It corresponds to the hidden saying that is beyond all conception and which itself is an interface with the infinite *Ain Sof*. It is for this reason that, similar to the first saying of creation and the first commandment, *Keter* is sometimes not referred to as part of the ten *Sefirot*. In such instances, *Keter* is hidden and *Da'at* manifests in its place. Since, as the *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches, the totality of existence is represented by a five-dimensional array of ten *Sefirot*, *Da'at* can only manifest in the absence of *Keter*. *Keter* and *Da'at* are then said to be mutually exclusive.

Keter and Da'at

The Ari discusses the mutual exclusion of *Keter* and *Da'at* in a number of places.[15] He explains that *Keter*-Crown and *Da'at*-Knowledge are respectively the internal and external manifestations of the same thing.[16] As we shall see, this statement ties together our entire discussion of the three highest *Sefirot*, *Keter*, *Chokhmah*, and *Binah*.

We saw that *Keter*-Crown was equivalent to a person's most basic

will. *Keter* is a person's internal selfhood and inner volition. *Da'at*-Knowledge, on the other hand, is the intellect that a person shows to the world.

In relation to *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding, as well, *Da'at*-Knowledge represents an externalization. *Chokhmah* and *Binah* are completely internal processes. *Da'at*, again, is a person's ability to express his intelligence to others. Thus, *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, and to a greater extent, *Keter*, represent the concept of internal mind, whereas *Da'at* is a function of the ability to communicate one's thoughts effectively.

This is illustrated in the Talmudic definition of someone who is deaf and dumb. The Talmud states that a "deaf-mute has no *Da'at*."[17] Although he may possess *Keter* or internal intellect, he lacks the ability to communicate it to the world and is therefore considered to have no *Da'at*. As soon as he can communicate by writing or sign-language, however, he is no longer considered "mute" according to Jewish law.[18] Thus, we can see that the basic ability to communicate and develop an intelligent relationship with the external world is a function of the quasi-*Sefirah* of *Da'at*.[19]

God's Free Will

The Ari's model of the mutual exclusion of *Keter* and *Da'at* can be explained in yet another way, which has important consequences with regard to our understanding of God Himself. *Keter*-Crown can be said to represent God's absolute freedom of action. God's *Da'at*-Knowledge, on the other hand, can be said to introduce an element of predetermination into creation. In a time sense, God's knowledge of the present and future is exactly like His knowledge of the past. Furthermore, unlike man's knowledge, God's knowledge is absolute and deterministic. His knowing what He is going to do before He does it makes what is known as good as done. This being so, the question arises as to whether God is really free to do what He wants, or can it be said that His knowledge (*Da'at*) acts as a determining factor to limit His free will (*Keter*)? Here we see that the mutual exclusion of *Keter* and *Da'at* is rooted in a philosophical paradox that involves God's knowledge and His free will. The answer to the question, of course, is that both sides of the paradox are true.[20] From the point of view of *Keter*-Crown, even God's knowledge is not deterministic. His free will is not restrained by anything, not even by His own *Da'at*.

On the other hand, God constricts His freedom of choice in order to allow a finite time-space continuum to come into existence. From

the point of view of *Da'at*, God knows everything about the future. The presence of *Da'at* among the *Sefirot* will conceal the absolute indeterminacy of *Keter*, almost forcing it to conform to the laws and logic established in *Chokhmah* and *Binah*.

Keter represents the very concept of free will that God created in order to bring His creation to the desired goal. When He then created *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, *Binah*-Understanding and *Da'at*-Knowledge, He established laws that, in effect, would limit or conceal His free choice. It was only once these *Sefirot* were brought into existence that He bound Himself, as it were, to follow the rules.[21]

A good analogy to this would be a chess game where a player could move his pawn across the entire board in one move. Nothing prevents him from doing so except the prior commitment to play according to the rules of the game. Similarly, God made a contract with creation that He will follow the rules and laws laid down in *Chokhmah* and *Binah*. Because of this commitment, things can seem to be going in a predetermined way which is antithetical to the total indeterminacy of *Keter*. Nevertheless, even when everything is running according to plan, and the level of *Keter*-Crown is hidden, it is still the motive force acting behind the scenes to bring about God's will in creation.

Thus, even though the level of *Keter* transcends and even seems to contradict the more limited aspects of God's Providence, it is clothed within all the other *Sefirot* and is hiddenly revealed through them. In addition, when necessary, the level of *Keter* will be manifest, as for example, when God chooses to circumvent the natural course of history and reveal His absolute authority over creation.

The paradigm for this is when God revealed Himself to Moses at the Burning Bush. This took place just before the Exodus from Egypt when God was about to totally transcend the laws with which He had created the world. The Name of God used here is *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*, "I will be what I will be" (Exodus 3:14), which is the Name associated with the *Sefirah* of *Keter*.[22] The only time this Name is revealed is before the Exodus. If we analyze the meaning of this Divine Name, the underlying message is that, on the level of *Keter*, God does not exist in any sense or any manifestation that we can comprehend.[23]

Man's Free Will

We have seen that it is only when *Keter*-Crown is hidden and *Da'at*-Knowledge is manifest that God is bound by the laws and logic of creation. Even here, however, the influence of *Keter* is merely concealed and not totally absent. There is always an element of indeterminacy in

creation. This is due, in large part, to man. The truth is that whenever man activates his free will, God's *Da'at* disappears and *Keter* manifests in its place.[24]

One of the most fundamental premises of Judaism is that man was given the ability to choose and act without the slightest compulsion. This ability distinguishes him not only in his actions, but also in the profound effect that an act of human will can have on a seemingly irreversible situation. In fact, as we have said, in order that man could resemble God, He gave him a divine soul and endowed him with free will. According to many commentators, this is the meaning of man having been created "in the image of God."[25]

Thus, man's *Keter*, his aspect of free will, is analogous to God's *Keter*. The *Sefirah* of *Keter* represents God's absolute freedom of action in bringing about His purpose in creation. It also represents man's most basic internal volition and essential being. On the level of *Keter*, man is compelled neither by internal predisposition nor external stimuli. His decisions are completely independent of all other considerations. It is only thus that he can be a truly responsible being. God may have absolute knowledge of the future, but this in no way deprives the individual of his own free choice.[26]. For no matter what determining influences he may have been subject to, he has the power to transcend his own limitations. This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement that God leads a person along the path that he has chosen to follow.[27]

Mercy and Repentance

Keter-Crown is also referred to as "the world of mercy."[28] We can understand this better if we remember that the very purpose of creation was for man to enjoy the greatest possible closeness to God. In order to maximize his sense of accomplishment, an environment was created where man would be able to choose good as a matter of his own free will. God would then weigh the deeds of every individual and judge man according to the fairest possible rule of justice. Man would become the recipient of the ultimate good as a result of his own effort and accomplishment.[29]

Nevertheless, when God's overriding purpose deems it necessary, He can suspend the rule of justice and judge with mercy alone. From the level of *Keter*-Crown, God can overlook any sin or rectify any wrong that might otherwise prevent Him from guiding the world toward its destined perfection.[30]

This is the meaning of what God told Moses after the sin of the Golden Calf, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,

and I will show compassion to whom I will show compassion" (Exodus 33:19). God was telling Moses that His mercy is beyond man's comprehension. For while His Attribute of Justice (*Midat HaDin*) might demand an unmitigated response for any wrong man commits, His Attribute of Mercy (*Midat HaRachamim*) transcends all judgments of whether man is worthy or not. On the level of *Keter*-Crown, God's authority over creation is absolute and His mercy is totally unmitigated.[31]

It is for this reason that *Teshuvah*-Repentance comes from the level of *Keter*-Crown.[32] For it is only from the point of view of pure mercy that "nothing can stand up before the power of repentance."[33] In the same way that the Kabbalists teach us that *Keter* precedes and transcends the laws and logic of creation, the Sages tell us that the concept of repentance was brought into existence prior to the creation of the world.[34] For man's ability to elevate evil and transform it into good by realizing his mistakes and changing his mode of conduct contradicts logic. It is only because of the power of repentance that his deepest failings and shortcomings can no longer prevent him from coming close to God. On the contrary, his past is transformed with the new awareness that God was never really far away. Even in his darkest moments, God's mercy was waiting to be revealed. Despite the sin and evil he may have committed, a lifeline remains whereby he can repent and return to God. The vehicle of such repentance is God's Attribute of Mercy, the level of *Keter*-Crown.[35]

Thus, while Moses was still on Mount Sinai asking forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf, God revealed the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. In proclaiming these, God was showing Moses that His mercy supersedes all considerations of whether man has sinned in the past or will sin in the future.[36] For by repenting from the very depths of his being, man arouses his true *Ain* and connects to the level of *Keter*, which transcends all time-bound concepts. He is thus freed from having to sin again in the future and the sins of his past are neutralized or rectified in the sense that they have occasioned his own inner transformation.[37] It is in this sense that the Sages said that even the most serious sin cannot stand in the way of sincere repentance. God was also teaching Moses that by stimulating his own mercy and acting forgivingly towards others, man can arouse God's mercy and be worthy of His total forgiveness and cleansing.[38] God thus passed before Moses and proclaimed: "God (1), merciful (2) and gracious (3), slow (4) to anger (5), and abundant in love (6) and truth (7). Keeping mercy (8) to the thousandth generation (9), forgiving sin (10), rebellion (11), and error (12), and cleansing (13)" (Exodus 34: 6-7).[39]

Chapter 6: CHOKHMAH and BINAH

In essence, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom is as incomprehensible as *Keter*-Crown. In fact, as we have seen, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom parallels the universe of *Atzilut*, and *Atzilut* is also referred to as "nothingness." We are able to comprehend the logic of *Binah*-Understanding, because we are using our own *Binah* to that effect. Since *Chokhmah* is higher than *Binah*, however, it is evident that we cannot use our *Binah* to understand it.[1]

One of the Biblical sources for *Chokhmah* and *Binah* is the verse: "God founded the earth with *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and established the heavens with *Binah*-Understanding" (Proverbs 3:19). The Bible states here that *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding are the basic components of creation. In a divine sense, *Chokhmah* constitutes the axioms which define the world, while *Binah* is the logical system that connects these axioms. All the laws of nature are essentially axioms, and the simplest axiom contains several levels. For example, the fact that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line means that a point exists, straight lines exist, space exists, the concepts of existence, of shortness and length exist, etc. All of these categories exist in *Chokhmah*-Wisdom. In *Binah*-Understanding they interplay logically and emerge as a coherent system of laws.

When God commanded the Israelites to build the Tabernacle in the desert, He selected Betzalel to accomplish the task, filling him with "wisdom, understanding and knowledge" (Exodus 31:3). Since the Tabernacle was a microcosm of creation, its construction required the same ingredients of *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, *Binah*-Understanding and *Da'at*-Knowledge that God used to create the *Olamot*-Universes.[2] Thus, the famous Biblical commentator Rashi explains these divine qualities as they related to Betzalel: *Chokhmah* is what a person learns from others. It represents the ability to master a subject and integrate its fundamental axioms into one's mental processes. *Binah* alludes to the ability to extract additional information from data already received. Finally, *Da'at* refers to the special Divine assistance that Betzalel needed to accomplish his work.[3]

The Talmudic explanation of *Binah* is "understanding one thing from something dissimilar."[4] It is related to the word *Bein* meaning

"between."[5] Thus, *Binah* implies distance and separation. When you look at something logically, you have placed yourself at a distance from it. *Chokhmah*, on the other hand, is made up of the same letters as *Koach Mah*, the potential of what, or the power to question.[6] *Chokhmah* thus refers to the question of what something really is, its essence. For instance, looking at the color red is a *Chokhmah*-level process. Since "red" cannot be described except in terms of itself, you can only get the concept of red into your mind by using *Chokhmah*. To describe it would mean to separate yourself from its essence and this would already belong to the realm of *Binah*-Understanding.[7]

When you look at something on the level of *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, you are essentially identifying with its essence. In other words, you are trying to make it a part of your own axiomatic structure. You are basically taking the concept and integrating it into yourself.

The same idea is evident in the *Mishnah*. In response to the question as to who has *Chokhmah*, the *Mishnah* states that it is one who learns from every person.[8] In other words, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom is defined as the information input in a person's mind. Just as *Chokhmah*-Wisdom constitutes the axioms of creation on the sefirotic level, in human terms, it corresponds to the fundamental axioms of cognition that lie behind all our thought processes. These axioms are both built into our minds at birth and integrated from our subsequent life experience. They constitute our essential ability to create information, structure and categorize it, and thus gain wisdom.

Thus, *Chokhmah* is the *Sefirah* that contains in potential all the laws of creation.[9] Moreover, it constitutes the basic set of axioms that determine how these laws will function in actuality. The Kabbalists refer to this when they say that the light of *Chokhmah* pervades all creation down to the lowest level of *Asiyah*-Making. This is alluded to in the verse, "How many are Your deeds (*ma'asim*), God; You have made (*asitah*) all of them with wisdom (*Chokhmah*)" (Psalms 104:24).[10]

Chokhmah is seen as the basic blueprint that God created to bring the entire spiritual-physical universe into existence. It is also the active intellect that God uses to run the universe. Although God was not compelled to create the world through the vehicle of the intellect, He bound Himself to its rules when He created *Chokhmah*. He then created man with the same intellect and the same built-in axioms. They would allow him to grasp the underlying principles of creation by contemplating God's handiwork.

The relationship between *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding can be grasped in terms of the relationship between male

and female.[11] In a human relationship, the male essentially provides the sperm and the female takes it, holds it in her womb for nine months, after which she delivers a fully developed child. In the same way, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom is a series of facts which we can put into the womb of *Binah*-Understanding in order to develop an entire logical structure. The paradigm of this is mathematics. If we take ten digits from zero to nine and a few axioms, put them in the womb of *Binah*, and let them gestate, we can obtain the whole corpus of mathematics.

Again, in terms of the relationship between man and woman, *Chokhmah*-Wisdom must join *Binah*-Understanding. As the confluence of *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, *Da'at*-Knowledge is equivalent to the idea of a complete union of opposites. The only way that man and woman can love each other, not only physically but mentally and spiritually as well, is to remove all the barriers that separate them. In essence, a man and woman in love can get close in a way no other two human beings can. This might be the reason why the Torah makes use of the concept of *Da'at*-Knowledge especially for Adam and Eve. They are the paradigmatic human beings, and therefore the love between them must have been the greatest love that ever existed between two people. Thus, looking at the sexual union as a mere physical act is not *Da'at*-Knowledge.[12]

Another way of looking at *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding is that in the five-dimensional array, *Chokhmah* is past and *Binah* is future. This is reflected in the Hebrew word *Zakhar* (זָכַר), which means "to remember."[13] The same letters form the word *Zakhar* (זָכָר), "male." Similarly, the word *Nekevah* (נְקֵבָה) means "female," but it derives from the same root as *Nikev* (נָקַב), "to pierce."[14] In essence, therefore, the past is male and the future female. Both *Chokhmah*-Wisdom and the past can be explained as "the information that we have." The future, on the other hand, only exists in our projections which are a product of *Binah*. It is pure conjecture and we must therefore pierce into our *Binah* to see it.

Chokhmah-Wisdom thus penetrates and impregnates *Binah*-Understanding, which is like a womb that stores the past and gives birth to the future. We might remember the past (*Chokhmah*) and anticipate the future (*Binah*), but we only know the present. The present is the only place where we really have *Da'at*-Knowledge.

Last to be analyzed in our discussion of *Chokhmah* and *Binah* is their relationship to the Tetragrammaton and the *Olamot*-Universes. *Chokhmah* parallels the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton and *Binah* parallels the first *Heh*.[15] Thus, the "coin" or the essence of existence that God

wishes to bestow contains all the axioms of creation. As we have seen, the Ten Sayings of creation find their parallel in the ten *Sefirot*. On the level of *Chokhmah*, these sayings are undifferentiated and are all contained within the *Yod*. The *Yod* is, then, *Chokhmah*, or what is given. This is also the level of *Atzilut*.

The "hand" that defines existence and makes it available is *Binah*. As we shall see, it is through *Binah*, understanding or logic, that the universe of *Beriyah* is brought into existence. This, again, is the concept of making the essence of existence available by "lowering" it, on the one hand, and by breaking it up into its constituent parts, on the other.[16] It is only through the power of *Binah* that we can begin to understand the axioms of creation and the axioms of our own being. This in turn will lead to the last two letters of the Tetragrammaton, *Vav* and *Heh*, where God reaches out and man is finally able to experience the Divine. These two letters parallel the lower seven *Sefirot* of *Atzilut* which form the basis for what will become the universes of *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. It is through these levels that God constricts His light further and gives man the ability to receive existence in a way that he can actually benefit from it.

Sefirot	*Tetragrammaton*	*Olamot*
Keter	Apex of *Yod*	*Adam Kadmon*
Chokhmah	*Yod*	*Atzilut*
Binah	*Heh*	*Beriyah*
The Six	*Vav*	*Yetzirah*
Malkhut	*Heh*	*Asiyah*

Chapter 7: CHESED, GEVURAH and TIFERET

Chesed-Love connotes kindness and altruism. Burying the dead is referred to as *Chesed shel Emet*, true altruism, because the person you bury is unable to repay you.[1] Hence, *Chesed*-Love has to mean an unconditional giving. True altruism is to do something when you do not expect anything in return. Essentially then, *Chesed* is the idea of giving oneself totally.

We mentioned that the lower seven *Sefirot* parallel the seven days of creation. *Chesed* is the first of these lower *Sefirot*, paralleling the first day. The main creation on the first day was light.[2] The main property of light is that it has no bounds. This is equivalent to *Chesed*, giving without bounds; being unrestrained, being unbounded, and perhaps even undisciplined.[3]

Gevurah parallels the second day of creation.[4] The *Rakia*-Firmament was created on the second day. Hence, the concept of *Gevurah* relates to barriers. *Gevurah*-Restraint is then the opposite of *Chesed*-Love. *Chesed* is essentially God giving of Himself unrestrictedly, opening doors all the way. The definition of *Gevurah*, on the other hand, is "Who is strong (*gibor*)? He who restrains his urge."[5] *Gevurah*, the idea of Divine strength, is God's ability to withhold Himself from creation and to close doors.[6]

If God were to give freely of Himself, He would totally overwhelm creation with *Gedulah*-Greatness, the original name of *Chesed*-Love.[7] If God were to allow His Greatness to shine forth, the world could not exist. If God were to hold Himself back completely, the world could not exist either.[8] In order for the world to exist, therefore, *Chesed* and *Gevurah* must balance each other and this involves a constant interplay between the two. This is why in the body, *Chesed*-Love is the right hand and *Gevurah*-Restraint is the left hand, and of course the right and left work in concert.[9]

Among Biblical heroes, *Chesed*-Love relates to Abraham, who is referred to as *Ish Chesed* (the "man of lovingkindness").[10] Abraham did deeds of kindness. He prepared food for everyone in his area and for all wayfarers. He acted kindly and went out to greet them. Not only that, but he also put himself totally on the line when pleading for the people in Sodom.

Gevurah-Restraint, on the other hand, relates to Isaac.[11] The paradigmatic event in Isaac's life is where he totally nullifies his own will and allows himself to be bound on the altar. He is in complete control of himself. Not only is he physically bound but mentally bound as well. You see a person totally held back. *Gevurah* is thus essentially the ability and the strength to overcome one's self.

Gevurah-Restraint parallels *Din*-Law.[12] In interpersonal relationships of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, if one person relates to another with *Chesed*, he could pour out his most personal feelings. If he related to his friend with *Din*, however, his relationship with him would become totally structured and restrained, within very narrow limitations. A judge, for example, cannot say, "I like this man and I want to do him a favor. I want to be altruistic toward him." A judge cannot be altruistic; he has to be very delineated. Hence, *Gevurah*-Restraint is *Din*-Judgment.[13]

In terms of personal characteristics, the *Chesed* person is primarily oriented toward other people. In a negative sense he would be totally dependent on people's approval for anything he does. He cannot make any decisions of his own. He is always looking at how other people regard him. The *Gevurah* person, on the other hand, does not care at all about other people and finds it impossible to love someone else or be loved in return. He never does anybody a favor. He is withdrawn and totally self-contained.

In the case of a man and a woman in love, if only one of the partners gives of himself, it is an unbalanced *Chesed* relationship. This can lead to a total loss of one's identity. *Gevurah*, on the other hand, is not giving anything. Whereas *Chesed*-Love represents a total surrender of one's identity to another person, *Gevurah*-Restraint would involve a rigid maintaining of identity by erecting a barrier between oneself and the other. In essence, for a good relationship, each partner has to learn how to integrate these two modes, the ability to maintain an identity, while at times to merge with another person.

Tiferet is usually translated as "beauty," but it does not carry the usual connotation of beauty. *Tiferet*-Beauty is like harmony, a harmonic beauty.[14] Take pure white and pure black. Pure white would be *Chesed*-Love and pure black would be *Gevurah*-Restraint. There is no harmony or beauty in each one by itself, but as soon as I take black and white and mix them together I can make all kinds of beautiful pictures, not by merging, which would just give grey, but by a blending of the two. Again, with pure *Chesed*, you can take a whole pail of paint and just pour it on the canvas. With pure *Gevurah* you hold a brush in your hand and you are unable to touch the canvas. *Tiferet* means

you are able to harmonize and blend these two extremes. In terms of the human body, *Chesed* is the right arm and *Gevurah* is the left arm. *Tiferet* is not both hands together, however, but rather the torso with all its complexity.

Whereas *Chesed*-Light was created on the first day, and *Gevurah*-Firmament was created on the second day, on the third day, God separated the seas and the dry land. In other words, the third day set boundaries: not all sea, not all dry land, but a balance between the two. In addition, plants were created on the third day. A plant grows, so that you have the element of *Chesed.* Yet, a plant is enclosed; it has a barrier between itself and the outer world, which is the element of *Gevurah.* A plant is like a controlled, aesthetic growth.[15]

Concerning the relationship of the Patriarchs with the *Sefirot*, we saw that Abraham is the paradigm of *Chesed*-Love. He is the pure altruist. Isaac is the person who totally subjugates his ego. In fact, you see this to such a degree, that after being bound upon the altar, Isaac's life becomes a perfect parallel of Abraham's life. He digs the same wells that Abraham dug;[16] he goes down to the Philistines and calls Rebecca his sister,[17] just as Abraham had done with Sarah.[18] The reason for this is that Isaac is a person who totally gives up his ego. Abraham is the initiator; *Chesed* is essentially initiating a new idea. Whereas Abraham initiates the new movement, Isaac sees himself as a transmitter. He is a perfect disciple. *Chesed*-Love and *Gevurah*-Restraint can thus also be seen as representing master and disciple. The master has to be the one who gives; the disciple is the one who totally annuls his ego to receive. Together they represent the perfect *Chesed-Gevurah* relationship.

Tiferet-Beauty is the balance, and in this sense, it represents Jacob. The main *Midah*-Attribute that we find in Jacob is *Emet*-Truth. Jacob is the first person in the Bible who reveals the full spectrum of human emotions ranging from love to anger. Jacob is a real human being. If he feels something, he expresses his feelings. He sees Rachel, loves her, and expresses his emotions.[19] This is an example of a truthful person as defined by the Talmud: "What is outside is what is inside."[20] A person can be true if he is balanced. If he either totally gives or totally restrains himself he cannot be true. If he is well balanced within himself, however, he can have a balanced relationship with other people.

Chapter 8: NETZACH, HOD and YESOD

We have discussed the first triad of the seven lower *Sefirot*, *Chesed*-Love, *Gevurah*-Restraint, and *Tiferet*-Harmony, paralleling the upper body. Before going into the second triad, *Netzach*-Dominance, *Hod*-Empathy and *Yesod*-Foundation, paralleling the lower body, we should discuss *Chesed*-Love, *Gevurah*-Restraint and *Tiferet*-Beauty in terms of the relationship they represent. Essentially, *Chesed*-Love and *Gevurah*-Restraint are giving relationships. Giving can also imply creating, as well as giving existence or structure. *Chesed* therefore denotes the concept of giving freely, on the one hand, while *Gevurah* holds back from giving, on the other. The main point here is that they are both related to giving. *Tiferet* is a balanced giving; the ability to create a harmonious relationship. A *Tiferet* relationship, however, is still essentially one of imposing one's giving on another, which does not allow for the possibility of reciprocation.

In Kabbalah, *Yesod*-Foundation parallels the sexual organ.[1] This is the organ with which a person can give pleasure and yet, at the same time, receive pleasure. Hence, whereas *Tiferet*-Beauty is essentially a one-way relationship, *Yesod*-Foundation is basically a reciprocal relationship. The paradigm of this is the relationship between man and woman, which is the most perfect reciprocal relationship that exists.

The *Sefirot* are sometimes represented as a *Binyan*-Building. The word *Yesod* means "foundation." A foundation does not merely support a building. It establishes the proper relationship between the building and the ground.[2] In the same way, the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*-Foundation represents the ideal reciprocal relationship.

We have seen, then, that the first triad of *Sefirot* comprises essentially a one-way relationship. Once this relationship is perfectly balanced, one can start working on a two-way relationship, which is the second triad, *Netzach*-Dominance, *Hod*-Empathy, and *Yesod*-Foundation.

A good illustration of a *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy relationship is a woman nursing a child. Nursing can give a woman as much pleasure as it gives the child or more. In fact, in relating the story of Rabbi Akiba's imprisonment by the Romans, the Talmud tells how his disciple Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai came to him to learn Torah. Rabbi Akiba said to him, "My son, more than the calf wishes to suck, the cow

wants to give it milk."[3] The message was that more than the disciple wanted to learn, the teacher wanted to impart. This is the idea of the *Netzach-Hod* relationship. It is something that I give, but a giving from which I receive.

The *Sefirah* of *Yesod*-Foundation parallels the sixth day of creation, when man was created. Man is the foundation of creation.[4] God gives to us but we give something back to Him. We fulfill His purpose in creation, and essentially, in that respect we give pleasure to God.[5]

This is the underlying idea of the Song of Songs, where the relationship between God and the *Tzadik*, or God and Israel, is likened to that between two lovers. In the case of two lovers it is not just pleasure, but rather an intensity, where giving and receiving become one act, as if your whole being becomes absorbed in this relationship. This is *Yesod*-Foundation. *Yesod* is a reciprocal relationship wherein your entire being is involved.

Essentially, you see this when two people fall in love; long before there is any physical tie, the mental attachment is so strong that it becomes a bond between the two people, and they become inseparable. This in itself is *Yesod*-Foundation.[6] It represents the relationship the *Tzadik* has with God, where he is constantly attached to God. *Devekut*-Cleaving to the Divine comes from *Yesod*.[7]

Let us examine how this relationship relates to *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy. *Netzach*-Dominance is on the right side, under *Chesed*-Love, whereas *Hod*-Empathy is on the left. Hence, *Netzach*-Dominance is a derivative of *Chesed*-Love, and *Hod*-Empathy is right beneath *Gevurah*-Restraint. If I am dealing with another person, it is not just a question of giving or holding back, because essentially, the more I give (*Chesed*), the more I am changing this person, the more I am overwhelming him (*Netzach*). The more I restrain myself (*Gevurah*), the more I give way to the needs of another, the more I allow him to assert his own individuality (*Hod*). What is required is a harmonious balance between *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy, and it is this that leads to a perfect *Yesod* relationship.

The word *Netzach* (נצח) comes from *Menatzeach* (מנצח), meaning to "conquer" or "overcome."[8] One can see this implication in a male-female relationship. Some men in a relationship feel that they must totally overwhelm the woman, who is not left with much personality of her own. Some women also have a *Netzach* relationship with their husbands, where they have to dominate them in every way.

Hod-Empathy is just the opposite. It is a relationship where I totally give in to the other person. In *Hod*-Empathy, I essentially annul myself,

and lose all account of myself. For instance, if a person allows himself to become totally passive to the point of being seduced, this would be the ultimate *Hod* relationship. It is for this reason that the Hebrew word for Splendor, *Hod*, also has the connotation of *Hoda'ah*, which means submission. As we shall see, *Hod*-Empathy is submissive in the sense that it allows evil to exist.[9]

The idea of *Netzach* and *Hod* is a question of asserting your identity on the one hand, or total compliance with the other person's identity, on the other. The perfect *Yesod*-Foundation relationship is of course the balance between the two. What is important to emphasize here is that this rule holds true both in the relationship between man and God as well as between man and woman. *Yesod*-Foundation represents the most powerful bond that can exist between two individuals. At the same time it is the ultimate attachment of man to the Divine. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov explains that marital intimacy is the paradigm of man's relationship with God. The motions of the sexual act represent this balancing back and forth between *Netzach* and *Hod*, while the final cessation of motion is *Yesod*.[10] *Yesod*-Foundation is thus the perfect mean between *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy, the blending of two people in love. It is not only the physical blending, but a psychological and emotional blending which is the perfect balance between maintaining our identity, yet surrendering it.

The Biblical personality associated with the *Sefirah* of *Yesod* is Joseph. It is important to note in this connection that the *Yesod* relationship between Jacob and Rachel was perfect. It is for this reason that Joseph their son was able to attain the level of *Tzadik*, the righteous one.[11]

The Torah tells about the love between Jacob and Rachel, and describes it as one of the greatest loves the world has ever known.[12] It is almost seen as a paradigm. The world was created in seven days and Jacob worked seven years for Rachel.[13] He went through an entire process of creation to marry her. Joseph, as well as Benjamin, were born of that love.

Benjamin's portion in the Holy Land was the Temple in Jerusalem.[14] In the Temple were the Holy of Holies and the Ark with the two Cherubs on it, embracing each other. They represented the perfect love between God and Israel: this was Benjamin's portion. The Talmud says that on the Holidays, the Cohanim (Priests) and the Levites would open the curtains of the Holy of Holies so that the people would see the Cherubs in this embrace. They would then declare, "See how great your love before God is! Just as these two Cherubs are in this endearing embrace with one another, so too is God's relationship with us."[15] And this

had to be in the portion of one of Rachel's children, in Benjamin's portion.

The first child born out of this love, however, was Joseph. We said that Joseph is referred to as the *Tzadik*. This is because he refused to have intercourse with Potiphar's wife.[16] What gave him the power to overcome this temptation? He saw the image of his father[17] and remembered that he was born of the most perfect relationship that had ever existed between a man and a woman. Therefore, how could he ever permit himself to have an imperfect relationship?

It is significant that the Torah presents man and woman together as comprising the image of the Divine. The Torah thus says, "God created man in His image, in the image of God He created them, male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). This clearly implies that male and female together form the image of God.

The reason for this is obvious. A male and female have the power to do the most God-like thing possible, namely, to create life. The power to conceive a child is so God-like that the Talmud states that when a man and a woman create a child, God Himself is their third partner.[18]

Think of someone who comes from a very good marriage where the parents are in love with each other and there is perfect harmony. Undoubtedly, such a person will find it natural to love and be loved, and thus establish a similar relationship with his own spouse. Furthermore, a perfect *Yesod* relationship between a man and wife is a clear indication that they are on a high spiritual level. They will remain faithful to each other, even in the face of temptation and adversity.

This indicates that in order to guard the sanctity of the marriage bond, the attribute of *Yesod* must function in two opposite but complementary modes, namely, one of abstinence and one of intercourse. In the first mode, *Yesod*-Foundation is called "*Tzadik*, the foundation of the world."[19] The word "world" here is *Olam*, also having the connotation of *Alam*-Hidden.[20] The *Tzadik* is one who guards his purity and innocence by abstaining from all forbidden sexual relationships. Therefore, *Yesod*-Foundation is called Righteous (*Tzadik*) when the sex organ is hidden and not active.[21] This is illustrated in the life of Joseph. As we saw, it was in Egypt that Joseph attained the perfection of *Yesod*-Foundation when he refused to have intercourse with Potiphar's wife.

In the second mode, *Yesod*-Foundation is called *Chai*-Alive or *Chai HaOlamim*, "Life of the Worlds."[22] It is said to be "alive" when it is functioning during intercourse. This is the aspect of spiritual penetration represented by *Yesod*. The righteous individual is able to

penetrate through the "hiddenness" of the *Olamot Elyonim*, the spiritual realms, and attain *Devekut*-Cleaving to the Divine. Yet, this has to be accomplished in a certain manner, with a perfect balance. This is the level that Joseph reached by mastering the attribute of *Yesod* in Egypt.

Similarly, a married couple in love are counterparts of the male and female archetypes on high. Therefore, when a husband and wife are intimate, they can completely identify themselves with the Divine attribute of *Yesod* as it unites with *Malkhut*. They can see their pleasure as a gift of God and experience a deep sense of thankfulness. They can be aware of the spark of the Divine in the pleasure itself and elevate it to its highest source. In their capacity of emulating the Divine, man and woman have the power to reveal the Divine purpose of creation or conceal it. When they direct this power to righteousness and spiritual wholeness, they arouse an influx of Divine blessing into the world. When they pervert their mission, they cause the opposite.

Yesod-Foundation thus parallels the appearance of man on the sixth day of creation. In particular, it parallels man's capacity to sin.[23] This is due to the fact that *Yesod* is the seat of both spiritual and physical pleasure. It therefore becomes one of the main tests of whether man will use his power to be God-like for good or for evil. The power to do evil is represented by the *Orlah*, the foreskin.[24] Adam was originally created circumcised; it was only later, after he sinned, that the foreskin appeared.[25] In fact, one of the reasons for the commandment of *B'rith Milah*, Circumcision, is so that we should remove this and get back to the state of Adam.[26]

Spiritually, what does the foreskin represent? We saw that *Yesod* is the concept of reciprocal relationship, of giving and receiving pleasure, which should be the most beautiful and holy thing in the world. Yet, what happens when the *Orlah* covers it? A *Klipah*, which literally means a "shell" or "barrier," attaches itself to *Yesod*-Foundation and prevents it from establishing a perfect bond with *Malkhut*-Kingship.[27]

The reason for this is clear. The *Klipah* of *Orlah* can enhance the lust, but it diminishes the emotional pleasure of the sexual relationship. Circumcision, on the other hand, decreases lust. It involves removing the *Orlah* from *Yesod* so that the pleasure can be purely spiritual.[28]

Ultimately, the greatest aphrodisiac between man and woman is love. What creates the greatest pleasure between spouses is a very deep emotional and spiritual love between them. This is the one thing that the *Orlah* diminishes, the capacity for spiritual love, but the circumcision enhances that very much. In the end, the physical aspect of the relationship is also heightened, but it becomes much purer.

Yesod thus represents one of the greatest human pleasures that exists. It is a type of pleasure that deals with the deepest areas of a person's psyche. Pleasure can be good or evil, as it can lead into either direction. Through the act of *Milah*-Circumcision, we remove the *Klipah*-Barrier from our pleasure experience, and therefore our desire for pleasure becomes pure holiness. Sexual desire is the one thing that is most often responsible for leading a person away from God. This happens because, as we saw, the evil inclination is involved in *Yesod*, since the first sin occurred on the sixth day, which was the attribute of *Yesod*-Foundation.[29] In this sense, the *Orlah*-Foreskin also represents the fact that the relationship between man and God, which is the *Yesod* relationship, is not complete.

We have seen that the *Tzadik*, the righteous person, represents *Yesod*-Foundation, and that in the World to Come, the Righteous will sit with "their crowns *in* their heads."[30] Rabbi Nachman of Breslav (1772-1810) points out that the word crown (*Atarah*) refers to the *Sefirah* of *Keter*-Crown.[31] Yet, we might offer an interpretation of this verse that differs somewhat from Rabbi Nachman's. In ancient Kabbalistic texts, the word *Atarah* also refers to the crown of *Yesod*, or in other words, the glans of the sexual organ. The act of *Milah*-Circumcision uncovers the entire *Atarah*-Glans by removing the *Orlah*-Foreskin that covers it.[32] The *Atarah* is the seat of pleasure of *Yesod*; it is the most sensitive part. In addition, according to Jewish law, a sexual relationship is only considered to be consummated when the *Atarah*, the glans, penetrates.[33] Hence, this establishes the *Yesod* relationship.

As we saw from the verse "the righteous man is the foundation of the world," the *Tzadik* represents *Yesod*. Hence, a *Tzadik* is somebody who can have Divine pleasure, or pleasure from *Yesod*. Thus, the statement "their *Atarah*-Crown is in their head" means that this organ, which is normally associated with the physical, becomes a means of having pleasure from the Divine. Hence, *Olam HaBa*, the World to Come, can be seen as an *Atarah* without any *Orlah* on it, so that the pleasure is one of pure spirituality. The righteous are portrayed with the attribute of *Yesod* in their minds. They derive pleasure from the radiance of the Divine Presence. This is essentially a *Yesod* relationship with the Divine.

As we discussed, *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy are usually together and imply imposing upon and giving in to another person. In the human body, *Netzach* and *Hod* represent the feet. In terms of walking, our feet also create a reciprocal relationship with the ground. We walk by picking up one foot, lowering it and pressing it against the ground, and then lifting up the other foot. One foot is always active

and the other always passive. Hence, one foot essentially establishes a *Netzach* relationship with the ground, while the other foot establishes a *Hod* relationship.

Netzach and *Hod* also parallel the testicles.[34] The testicles are the main precursors of the *Yesod-Malkhut* relationship. In a similar way, because of their central role in processing and transmitting divine sustenance, *Netzach* and *Hod* are seen as the sources of all prophetic experience.[35]

On the one hand, prophecy is a degree of enlightenment that is completely beyond the powers of human reason. It is an overwhelming experience during which the prophet's senses cease to operate, and his mental faculties no longer function independently.[36] In this sense, prophecy is a *Netzach* experience, where God literally imposes His message on the prophet's psyche.

On the other hand, this message must be transmitted in a language that the prophet can understand and with symbols that he can grasp. Ultimately, the prophecy is being "translated" into the prophet's language, and this is the *Hod* aspect of prophecy.[37]

Prophets other than Moses did not have a clear vision because they transmitted the message given to them in their own words, not in God's words.[38] The reason for this is that Moses' prophecy was totally imposed and without any barriers. Moses' prophecy was essentially through *Netzach*. The other prophets received their visions through the level of *Hod*. Similarly, it is Moses who embodies the attribute of *Netzach* because he totally imposed the Torah upon Israel. Aaron, on the other hand, was just the opposite. His ability to make peace between people stemmed from his willingness to give in to them. Even when the people wanted a golden calf, Aaron gave it to them. This demonstrated that he was the perfect paradigm of *Hod*.

Netzach and *Hod* are also associated with our *Emunah*-Faith in God.[39] The words from the daily liturgy, "Our God and the God of our fathers" represent two complementary aspects of faith. When we say "our God," we are referring to our own understanding of God. Since this is something that we can only come to on our own, it is a human parallel to the *Netzach* process. The "God of our fathers," on the other hand, is the *Hod* aspect of faith because it involves submitting to the authority of tradition, or to what is given to us. Again, the message is that true faith must develop without any interference from without. In order to be able to stand up against all possible challenges, however, it must be grounded in something that goes beyond our personal experience.[40]

It is important to mention at this point that *Netzach*-Dominance represents the primary purpose in creation, while *Hod*-Empathy is that

which is secondary. God's primary purpose in creation was that He should be able to reveal Himself to His handiwork, this being the greatest possible good He can bestow. It is impossible to accomplish this, however, without constriction, lowering and concealment, since no created thing could tolerate God's unrestricted light. Therefore, as a secondary concept, God must restrict His essence. As opposed to directly imposing His will on man, He gives in to man, so to speak, by lowering and concealing His light.[41]

This is one of the reasons why *Netzach* and *Hod* are related to the kidneys.[42] As we shall discuss, the kidneys are directly related to *Yesod*, in the sense of getting rid of waste matter.[43] In the divine realm this means that the concept of evil derives its nourishment from this triad of *Sefirot*, particularly from *Hod*.[44]

Again, the paradigm of this is Aaron and the golden calf.[45] Since Aaron embodies the attribute of *Hod*-Empathy, his submission to the will of the people represents the possibility of evil nourishing itself from the good.

This is also the idea of the angel striking Jacob's thigh after wrestling with him the entire night.[46] According to the *Zohar*, this was Jacob's left thigh, corresponding to *Hod*.[47] This battle took place on a spiritual level, and was perceived by Jacob in a prophetic vision.[48] The "man" with whom he wrestled symbolized all the forces of evil that would attack Jacob's descendants. The wound in the thigh symbolized the partial victory of evil. Jacob's children would suffer persecution. Many Jews would fall on the way; there would also be many apostates.[49] The fact that Jacob was injured in the left thigh indicates that this is the result of *Hod*, the secondary purpose.

Nevertheless, God was promising that despite all these sufferings, the Jewish people would never be totally overcome or conquered by evil. Jacob's offspring would ultimately survive to carry the banner of God's teachings to all mankind.[50] This then is the level of *Netzach*, the primary purpose.

Thus, the fact that evil exists and that it sustains itself from good is a result of the secondary elements in creation. The purpose of evil is to allow free choice to exist and thereby bring about the primary purpose, which is man's attaching himself to God and ultimately restoring the world to good. By way of analogy, evil is like the peel of a fruit or the shell of a nut. In themselves, they are useless, but they serve the secondary purpose of preserving the fruit until it is ready to be eaten.[51] The same is true of evil. It does not serve God's primary purpose of bestowing good, but it does fulfill the secondary purpose of making it possible. In

fact, the destiny of evil is to be transformed ultimately into good.[52] Slowly but surely, the world must reach the level of perfection planned by God.

The main place where we see this process happening is in *Hashgachah*-Providence, which we have called the Divine chess game. It is here that the *Netzach*-Dominance and *Hod*-Empathy relationship between God and man is reflected in all its subtlety.

People ask, how does God's providence interact with our free will? I often give the example of a chess game. Let us imagine that I would sit down with a grand master. Let us say he did not want to beat me. Could he maneuver some of my pieces over onto one side of the board, and then, move them to the other side of the board? Could he get my king in the middle, then in one corner, and then in another corner, and then in the third corner? Let us say he wanted to make my king travel all around the board. He could obviously get me to do it. Yet, I have free will in every move I make. Thus, essentially, I have choice. After a while, however, I might get myself into a predicament where I don't have any free choice, just as it happens in life.

If one decides to be a neurosurgeon, but had made educational decisions to the contrary, it is too late ten years later to go to medical school. An existential decision to go on one path has been made; it could be said that such a decision is equivalent to traveling on the northern route from New York to California, because unless one backtracks all the way, there is no other way to get to the southern route. Yet, when the crossroads were reached and decisions were made to take this route and not the other, essentially, there was free will.

What is happening in the chess game? It seems to be taking place between what the grand master is doing and my free will. Yet, he could use my free will to get me into any situation he wants me in. This is essentially the way Divine Providence works. God is the capital Grand Master.

A person even has the ability to "cheat" in the game of Divine Providence. As Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz (1560-1630), the author of *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith* (Two Tablets of the Covenant) explains it, this is because God's master plan involves the total perfection of every detail of creation. Since the way this perfection will be attained depends largely on how we use our free will, our sins can actually force God to revise His game plan in order to counteract our move and bring creation back to its intended goal.[53]

In a sense, therefore, we cheat every time we misuse our free choice and commit a sin. In terms of the Divine chess game, this is similar to making a move when the Grand Master is not looking. Although

He is aware of what we have done, He is too polite to object. His expertise can render our attempt invalid, however, for He can change His entire game on the spot in order to counteract our move.

In anything that happens in *Hashgachah*-Providence, in everything that we do, there has to be a reaction from God. Essentially then, *Hashgachah*-Providence is imposing a certain order on us, and then giving in to what we do. Just as with the chess game, when God imposes the order it is *Netzach*-Dominance. When He waits for us to move it is *Hod*-Empathy.

Netzach-Dominance is the fourth day of creation; the stars and the astronomical bodies were created on the fourth day. How did God create the astronomical bodies? Was there any reciprocity on their part? He set them where they are and that is where they remain forever. Essentially they follow very rigid laws after they are placed there; once they are set in motion we can tell exactly where a star is going to be twenty billion years from now. There is no need to account for any free will. This is precise *Netzach*-Dominance. God imposed His will and it is final.

Hod-Empathy is the fifth day of creation when the first living creatures, the fish, were created. Although all animals are usually seen as having no free will, this is in relation to man. Seen in relation to everything that preceded them, fish were the first creatures that could move about freely. Essentially, in creating fish, God was creating the first elements of change and free will.

According to an ancient *Midrash*, the first six days of creation can be seen as two sets of three days each, where the second set perfects and completes the first set. This is an exact parallel to the relationship between the first triad of *Sefirot*, *Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet*, and the second triad, *Netzach-Hod-Yesod*. The *Midrash*[54] states that on the first day (*Chesed*), God created light. On the fourth day (*Netzach*), three days later, He created the luminaries. On the second day (*Gevurah*), God created the oceans by dividing the waters. On the fifth day (*Hod*), He created fish, which is the perfection of water. On the third day (*Tiferet*), God created dry land. On the sixth day (*Yesod*), He created man, the perfection of dry land.

Chapter 9: MALKHUT

Giving and Receiving

In order to avoid any confusion between the first triad *Chesed-Gevurah-Tiferet*, and the second triad *Netzach-Hod-Yesod*, let me give two examples illustrating the relationship they have with each other.

In the case of a city wanting to control traffic flow across a bridge, *Chesed* would let as much traffic through as wants to cross; *Gevurah* would close it off completely; *Tiferet* would try to reach some kind of optimum.

We now have established that we want to find the optimum, but in terms of whom? An optimum for the city or for the people who want to enter? There are two possible optimums.

Another example would be to look at the relationship in terms of the desire to give. *Chesed* would be giving without regard to the consequences. *Gevurah* is holding back tightly, not giving anything. *Tiferet* is trying to reach the optimum of how much to give. But again, how is the optimum decided? Should it be according to the giver's needs or the receiver's?

Netzach is giving the optimum according to the giver's needs; *Hod* is giving it according to the receiver's; *Yesod* is giving it according to the needs of both. In the traffic analogy, *Netzach* would involve controlling traffic according to the city's needs; *Hod* would be controlling it according to the individual needs of every driver; *Yesod* would again be the optimum of considering the needs of both.

We can see, then, that *Tiferet* is trying to reach an optimum. *Yesod* is reaching it, and *Netzach-Hod* are different sides of that optimum. The six *Sefirot* from *Chesed*-Love to *Yesod*-Foundation thus constitute a single unified structure. We have seen that these six *Sefirot* are the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton. The *Vav* is the idea of forming a connection, of giving. In essence, the first triad represents the initial reaching out to give. This "giving," however, is still too powerful to be received. It is only in the second triad that the concept of giving is brought to its perfection and, tailored, so to speak, to the needs of the receiver. All together, then, we have these six elements in the idea of giving.[1]

When we now bring in the last *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, corresponding to *Malkhut*-Kingship, we have the idea of receiving. It

is the idea of being a *Keli*, a "vessel." *Malkhut* is the power that God gives us to receive from Him. Furthermore, it is in *Malkhut* that the *purpose* of giving is realized: a relationship where the one who receives can reciprocate and become a "giver."[2]

It is for this reason that *Malkhut* is seen as a feminine *Sefirah*. On the one hand, it is the ultimate "vessel" that was created to hold God's light. It represents the epitome of receiving and is therefore characterized as the *Sefirah* that "has nothing of its own."[3] *Malkhut* must literally receive everything that it has from the *Sefirot* that precede it. On the other hand, *Malkhut* represents the power that ultimately unifies all the diverse powers of the *Sefirot* and holds everything together. Without *Malkhut*, creation would remain incomplete.[4]

When we examine the difference between giving and receiving in terms of masculinity and femininity, we can see that the paradigm of a man is more diversified, whereas the paradigm of a woman is more unified. This becomes evident in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which states, as mentioned, that the six days of the week, which are masculine, are the six directions pointing outward.[5] The Sabbath, on the other hand, which is feminine, is the center point that draws all six points together.[6] Essentially, this teaches us that when we look at ourselves in terms of our external relationships, we are looking at our masculine identity. When we look at our Self, our inner core, we are almost looking at a feminine entity.

Another important idea about the female principle is that all week long in our struggle to gain spirituality, we are on a male level. On the Sabbath, we are on a female level because we can absorb the fruits of all we have done during the week. Thus, a person could work very hard spiritually all week long, but without the Sabbath he would have no way of receiving it. This is because the Sabbath is like the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton. It is the hand that receives. Without the Sabbath, therefore, it is like cutting off a person's hand, preventing him from receiving spirituality. It is like working for something but never receiving it. This is why the Sabbath is of such importance in Judaism.[7]

If you think of male and female biologically, the male is the giver; the female receives and nurtures and then gives forth much more than the man initiated. The man gives over one million sperm cells from which the woman selects only one. From her one single fertilized egg, however, she gives back a complete infant. She receives, but as part of receiving, she ends up creating and building something complete. Hence, the essence of femininity turns out to be much more complex.

If masculinity is giving, femininity is receiving and completing. Whereas masculinity parallels *Yetzirah*, which is "something from something," the femininity of *Malkhut* parallels *Asiyah*, which is "completion."

In speaking about *Chokhmah* and *Binah* we mentioned the verse, "God founded the earth with wisdom (*Chokhmah*) and established the heavens with understanding (*Binah*)" (Proverbs 3:19). The Kabbalists point out that the feminine principle (earth) has its root in *Chockhmah* whereas the masculine principle (heaven) derives from *Binah*.[8] This follows from what we have said. *Binah* is *Bein*, "separateness." It is therefore directly associated with the diversified nature of the six masculine *Sefirot*. *Chokhmah*, on the other hand, represents the totally integrated unity that typifies the essence of woman.

This relationship is illustrated beautifully in the Hebrew language itself. The Hebrew masculine personal pronoun is distinguished from the feminine personal pronoun by a single letter. The Hebrew *Hu* (הוא) means "he," while the Hebrew *He* (היא) means "she." In the case of *Hu* (הוא), the central letter is the *Vav* which represents the six masculine *Sefirot*. The feminine pronoun *He* (היא) contains a *Yod*. The *Yod* is a single point, the unified power of *Chokhmah*, that predominates in the essence of a woman.[9] In addition, the numerical value of *Yod* is ten, alluding to the fact that the ten *Sefirot* are undifferentiated in *Chokhmah*, separated and diversified from *Binah* to *Yesod* and finally brought together as a single unit in *Malkhut*. This alludes to the fact that the entire array of ten *Sefirot* reaches its culmination in *Malkhut*.

As we have said, the purpose of the *Sefirot* is to conceal God's light enough so that it can benefit those who have to receive it. In this sense, *Malkhut*-Kingship represents the ultimate concealment of the Divine for the purpose of interacting with creation. In *Malkhut*, God constricts Himself in order to give over His kingdom to man. He is essentially saying, "I created the world in such a way that it is all up to you now. I am giving you the keys."

Actually, this is a very deep concept. It is alluded to in the last of Rabbi Nachman's stories, "The Seven Beggars."[10] Rabbi Nachman began this story by telling about a king who had an only son. The peculiar thing is that this king wanted to give over his kingdom to his son during his own lifetime. This meant that the son would be king at the same time as his father.

What Rabbi Nachman is teaching us is that *Malkhut*-Kingship is not just a vessel that receives. As we have said, in order for *Malkhut* to be perfect, it must also give of what it receives. The receiving must transform it into a giver.

In terms of a kingdom, for example, *Malkhut* could represent the people's acceptance of the king's sovereignty, as well as their receiving all their needs from him. This kind of situation would be the paradigm of complete subservience. They are totally dependent on whatever the king provides them with.

If the king wants his subjects to interact with him, however, then he must give them the ability to govern themselves. They thus become his partners in directing the kingdom. They become givers as well as receivers.[11]

The concept of a king giving his son his kingdom during his lifetime is paralleled by King David who gave his throne to Solomon.[12] As we have seen, King David represents the perfection of *Malkhut*. We can see David as a person taking *Malkhut*, taking this little bit of authority the Jews gave him, bringing it through a period of gestation and pregnancy, and giving back a full-fledged powerful kingdom. We find here another aspect of pregnancy and birth. This is the paradigm of David.

David also represents *Malkhut* in the sense that he was the mouth of Israel.[13] According to the Talmud,[14] David's nights were divided into two parts. First he would learn the Torah until midnight and then he would compose songs and psalms of praise to God until dawn. It is significant that the Psalms as a whole contain all ten different types of song.[15] This points again to the letter *Yod* in the pronoun *He* (הִיא). As king of Israel it was important that David be able to integrate all the *Sefirot*. He was thus promised that the Messiah would come through him. It is the Messiah who will essentially give birth to a new world.

Chapter 10: THE SHATTERING of the VESSELS

Jacob and Laban

We have discussed the Ten *Sefirot* of *Atzilut* as being the basic ingredients that God used in creating the *Olamot*-Universes. Our next step is to explore the process involved in the creation of the *Sefirot* themselves. This process consisted of three stages which are alluded to in the Torah in the story of Jacob and Laban (Genesis 30-31).

After working for Laban as a shepherd for twenty years, Jacob was ready to return home to the land of Israel with his entire household. In payment for his service it was agreed upon that he would take only those sheep and goats which were "banded," "spotted" or "streaked." He separated his animals from Laban's by a distance of three days and within a miraculously short time he had built up a sizeable flock of his own.

"Banded" in Hebrew is *Akudim* (עקודים). Such animals had bands around their legs, while the rest of their body was white. Due to these bands, they appeared to be bound; in Hebrew, *Akud* (עקד) means "bound."

"Spotted" is *Nekudim* (נקודים). Such animals had black spots on a white body.

"Streaked" is *Berudim* (ברודים). This is the precise opposite of the above; the animal has a black body with white streaks, giving the appearance of hail. In Hebrew, hail is *Barad* (ברד).

The way in which Jacob succeeded in increasing his flock was obviously miraculous. Nevertheless, he followed a regular procedure. When he wanted his sheep to conceive banded, spotted or streaked offspring, he cut rods with the appropriate markings and set them out where the sheep mated. This in turn was based on a prophetic vision in which an angel appeared to Jacob and said to him, "Raise your eyes and you will see that the bucks mounting the sheep are banded, spotted and streaked" (Genesis 31:12). As a result of this vision, Jacob learned that he was to meditate on these rods while in a very high state of consciousness and thereby project his thoughts on the sheep being conceived.

Now, as the Ari states, when Jacob saw this vision, he was looking at the very beginning of the creation of the *Sefirot*.[1] It was because Jacob had reached such a high level of consciousness that he was able

to meditate on the spiritual dimension that underlies the physical reality and thereby influence the genetic structure of the sheep. The three types of markings in the vision represented the three major stages in the evolution of the *Sefirot*. By meditating on the latter, he succeeded in changing the former.

What Jacob saw was that when the *Sefirot* were first created they existed as a paradoxical "ten lights in one vessel." This is the first level, *Akudim* (banded), where all the *Sefirot* are completely undifferentiated and bound together.[2]

Next, these lights were divided into ten distinct entities. In this state they existed as simple *Nekudim* (spots or points).[3] This is a state where the primitive *Sefirot* could receive God's light, and they are thus called "vessels."[4] They could not interact or give anything to each other, however, and therefore could not hold the Divine light.[5] Instead, they were overwhelmed by the light and "shattered." This is known as the "Breaking of the Vessels."

After having been shattered, the Vessels were then rectified and rebuilt. This is the final stage, *Berudim* (streaked), where the *Sefirot* are connected as *Partzufim*, archetypal personas or spiritual parallels to the human body. This is the level usually referred to as the Universe of *Atzilut*.[6] It is in this rectified state that the *Sefirot* could now interact with each other and become givers as well as receivers.[7]

We can now summarize this process again and familiarize ourselves with the terms used. *Akudim* is the first level where all the *Sefirot* are bound together. In *Nekudim* they are separated into single points or vessels and the shattering takes place. *Berudim* is where they become reconstituted into *Partzufim*.[8]

The *Sefirot* thus originate in a completely undifferentiated state, bound together in *Akudim*. At this stage we are confronted with the paradoxical "ten in one."[9] We see one single indissoluble entity, yet we know that it contains the potential of separating into ten different functions. This corresponds to the level of *Keter*-Crown.

As we saw in discussing each of the *Sefirot*, any creative act requires all ten *Sefirot* acting in unison. In essence, all of the *Sefirot* are vessels of *Keter* and they constitute a unified system through which the light of *Keter* manifests itself.[10] When we go up a level, however, and see all of the *Sefirot* as they originate in one single vessel, this is the level of *Akudim*.

This in itself is a preparation for the next stage in the process that leads from unity and similarity to diffusion and dissimilarity. The "ten in one" situation is now forcibly dissolved. Each *Sefirah* must manifest as an independent entity. This is the next stage, the level of *Nekudim*.

It is here that the *Sefirot* first appear as ten distinct concepts. They are called *Nekudim*, points, because in this primitive state they are totally disconnected. The force of diffusion is so great that the *Sefirot* are now said to constitute a Universe of *Tohu*-Chaos.[11] The word *Tohu* comes from the root meaning "confounded."[12] When a person is confounded it means that he is perceiving an idea that his mind cannot hold. Similarly, the vessels of *Tohu*-Chaos received a light that they could not contain. Just as confusion and confoundment shatter the thought process, so these vessels were shattered. It is this shattering that is alluded to in the *Midrash* which states, "God created universes and destroyed them."[13]

The Kings of Edom

This "Breaking of the Vessels" is also alluded to in the Torah, in the account of the Kings of Edom, at the end of Genesis 36. These eight kings were descendants of Jacob's twin-brother Esau. The Torah thus states:

> "These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom[14] before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela son of Beor (1), became king... and died. He was succeeded by Yovev (2), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Chusham (3), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Hadad (4), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Samlah (5), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Saul (6), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Baal Chanan (7), who became king... and died. He was succeeded by Hadar (8) who became king... [Hadar's] wife was Meheitaval" (Genesis 36:31-39).

The main point that the Torah seems to be making about these kings is that they ruled and died in succession one after the other. This applies to all of them except the last, Hadar, whose death is not mentioned here.[15] Perhaps, as we shall see, this is related to the fact that he is the only king whose wife *is* mentioned.[16] In the meantime, the death of each of these kings alludes to the shattering of the original vessels and their falling to a lower level. Beginning with *Da'at*, which is included here, and ending with *Malkhut*, all of these *Nekudim*-Points "died."[17]

The dissolution and descent of a spiritual vessel is thus explained mainly through two allegories. In one case it is seen as shattering and in another as dying. It is important to note therefore that the death of the Kings

of Edom refers to the same event with a different allegory. In both cases we have a situation of confusion and chaos leading to complete breakdown and loss of identity.

In fact, the reason that the *Sefirot* of *Nekudim* are called *Melakhim*-Kings is intimately related to their being separate and distinct vessels.[18] As we have seen, it is the aspect of *Malkhut*-Kingship, the last *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, which represents the idea of a vessel that can receive existence and eventually give back something more perfect.[19] In their primitive state as kings or vessels of *Nekudim*, however, the *Sefirot* were only able to receive God's light.[20] Without the additional ability to interact and give to each other, they could not fulfill their ultimate purpose as vessels. When God "gave" His light to them, they were overwhelmed and shattered.

This also explains why the *Sefirah* of *Malkhut*-Kingship is referred to as "evil." The reason for this is that *Malkhut* not only has the power to hold, but also the power to hold back and constrain God's light. Thus, on the one hand, it is the ultimate vessel that God created to allow the universe to withstand and receive His light. On the other hand, however, it is the counterforce that opposes His power of giving. Since the function of evil is essentially the ability to hold back and conceal God's light, the kings or the vessels of *Nekudim* are therefore said to contain the root and potential for evil.[21] This inherent flaw will result in their shattering and giving birth to a realm where evil actually exists.

The vessels were originally among the axioms, the givens of creation. This puts them in the *Sefirah* of *Chokhmah*-Wisdom, which parallels the universe of *Atzilut*. When they could no longer contain the light that was coming into them, however, they shattered. No longer able to exist in *Atzilut*, they fell outside of *Atzilut* and became the source for what would later be the universe of *Beriyah*.[22]

Atzilut means "nearness" to the Divine and *Bar* means "outside." *Beriyah* is therefore an outside realm, and by definition, less Divine than *Atzilut*. In *Beriyah*, God's existence is slightly more concealed. It is for this reason that *Beriyah* is called *Olam HaPerud*, the Universe of Separation. It is here that the possibility of evil originates. The source for this evil is the fragments and shards of the holy vessels of *Atzilut*.[23]

Thus, when the vessels shatter and lose their identity, they should cease to exist. However, as the Ari explains, the spiritual dimension is governed by a "law of conservation" similar to that which we see in the physical universe. According to this principle, something that was created in the spiritual realm cannot cease to exist.[24]

This axiom has to be applied to the vessels. Logically then, they cannot cease to exist. In a sense, the only reason for their continued existence now is logic. This being the case, they go down to the world of logic which parallels *Binah*-Understanding. Thus, with the "destruction" of one universe, a new universe is created. This is *Beriyah*.

This can be illustrated in physical concepts. If, for example, you take the word S-A-N-E and rearrange its letters to spell N-E-A-S, the original word is still there. It is concealed, however, in another form. The only way we can decipher it and reconstitute the original word is by using *Binah*. Now it is no longer the given, which is "sane," but something that must be unscrambled by a process of logical inference. This is the level of *Beriyah*, an outside world that conceals God's purpose in creation. It was into this lower realm of existence that the broken vessels fell.

Sparks of Holiness

Perhaps the most famous allusion to the breaking of the vessels appears in the second verse of Genesis. The Torah thus states, "The earth was without form (*Tohu*) and empty (*Bohu*), with darkness on the face of the depths. But God's spirit moved (*Merachephet*) on the water's surface."

As we have mentioned, the word *Tohu* (תוהו) means "chaos." It can also be translated as "void" or "without form." *Bohu* (בוהו) is "emptiness." This is the emptiness of a vessel ready to receive. The word *Bohu* can also be read as two words, *Bo Hu* (בו הוא), literally "it is in it."[25] This is also because it is something that can hold the light "in it". Thus *Tohu* is the intermediate state that leads to the shattering.[26] *Bohu* is the rectified state of the vessels.[27] In Kabbalistic terminology, this state is called the Universe of *Tikkun*-Rectification.

"Darkness on the face of the depths" refers back to the shattering. *Tehom*-Depths can be read as *Tohu-m* (תהום) and indicates that these depths resulted from the chaos and confoundment that the original vessels experienced. In addition, rearranging the letters of *Tehom* we can see the word *HaMavet* (המות), which means "death."[28] *Choshekh* (חושך) means "darkness" and shares the same root letters as the word *Chosekh*, (חושך) meaning "to withhold."[29] Together these words allude to the concealment of the light that resulted from the shattering.

"But God's spirit moved (*Merachephet,* מרחפת)." In the word *Merachephet* the Ari finds yet another allusion to the fate of the Kings of Edom."[30] The first and last letters of this word spell *Met* (מת), which literally means "dead." As we have mentioned, a spiritual concept cannot cease to exist. It cannot "die." As the *Zohar* explains, however, something

is said to have died when it leaves its true level and descends to a lower level of existence.[31] The exact parallel to this is the burial of a person's body after he dies. We lower the dead body into the ground in order to show that it is descending to a lower level. In the same way, the descent of the Kings-Vessels of *Atzilut* to the outside realm of *Beriyah* was their death.[32]

Despite their shattering and descent, however, the Vessels still retain a small amount of holiness. This, again, is similar to a person that dies; his life-force does not leave him completely. Rather, there still remains in him an infinitesimal trace of life that the Kabbalists call *Hevel DeGarmi*, literally, "vapor of the bones."[33] It is through this very small portion of life that he will once again rise in the World to Come.[34]

In the same way, the light that once filled the Vessels did not leave them completely. *Nitzotzot*, literally, "sparks" of the original light accompanied the shattered vessels as they fell into *Beriyah* and below. These sparks would provide just enough spiritual life-force to insure that the broken vessels could be restored later as *Partzufim*. In the meantime, they represent the sparks of holiness in all things that must be elevated and brought back to the realm of the holy.[35]

According to the Ari, this entire process of death and resurrection is hinted at in the word *Merachephet*. As we saw, the first and last letters of this word spell *Met*-Dead. The three remaining letters are *Resh*, *Phe* and *Chet* (רפח). The numerical value of these three letters is 288. These are the 288 sparks of holiness inside of the shattered vessels.[36]

The symbolic significance of the number 288 is alluded to in the word *Ibur* (עיבור) whose numerical value is also 288.[37] *Ibur* means "gestation" or "pregnancy," thus indicating that the broken vessels with their 288 sparks are similar to seeds that are planted in the ground. Although they may appear to be rotting, they are going through a process which is necessary in order to bring forth new life. The 288 sparks thus represent the profound concept of death and resurrection. On the level of *Atzilut*, it is by virtue of these sparks that the shattered vessels of *Nekudim* will be rectified as *Partzufim*.

The Parable of the King's Son

The primitive *Sefirot* represent the concept of something that God created that did not fulfill its purpose. This is equivalent to the basic concept of evil. In a sense, however, since they were meant to shatter, they did fulfill their purpose. We can say therefore that they did not fulfill their *primary purpose* which was to hold the light. They did fulfill their *secondary purpose*, however, which was to shatter.

We saw that the *Sefirah* of *Netzach*-Dominance alludes to the idea of primary purpose, where God imposes His will and prevails against anything that might constitute an obstacle to His giving. *Hod*-Empathy, on the other hand, is secondary purpose, where God gives in to us in order to allow us to benefit from His light. This is one reason why the *Klipot*-Husks derive their sustenance from *Hod*, because it represents the concept of secondary purpose.[38]

The concepts of primary and secondary purpose can be illustrated with the *Zohar's* parable of the king who wanted to test his son's loyalty.[39] First, he warns the prince not to go near any loose woman. Then he hires a prostitute to tempt him. Actually, the prostitute is doing the king's bidding by tempting the prince. This, however, is only the secondary purpose of the king. His son is the real primary purpose. In a sense, the king is disguising his primary purpose by hiring the prostitute. It is only when the prince sees through this disguise that he is totally impervious to her charms.[40] In the same way, the evil that comes about as a result of the shattering is a concealment of God's primary purpose. This allows for the possibility of free choice. When man then overcomes the challenge of this concealment, he is master of the good he receives. This was the king's primary purpose.[41]

We mentioned that in order to receive God's light, a vessel must in some way be connected to God. The basic difference between the spiritual and the physical is the fact that space does not exist in the spiritual realm. Hence, there is no way in which the *Sefirot* can be physically connected to God. The only possible relationship is therefore resemblance. In order to receive God's light, the vessel must, at least to some extent, resemble God.

This, however, presents a difficulty. If God is the ultimate Giver, then the vessel is the ultimate receiver, and the two are two absolute opposites. In order for a vessel to properly receive, it must also give.

What is therefore needed is a "vessel" that can give as well as receive. The ultimate expression of such a vessel is man. If man is to receive God's light, he must first resemble Him by being a giver. This is accomplished through keeping God's commandments, thus fulfilling the purpose of creation and providing sustenance to the spiritual universes.[42] Before he can do this, however, he must also resemble God by having both free will and free choice. A man locked up in prison may have the same free will as everybody else, but there is little he can do with it. For man to resemble God to the greatest possible extent, he must exist in an arena where he has maximum freedom of choice.

To make this choice real, God must, so to speak, disguise His presence.

In order for man not to be an intellectual prisoner, God has to conceal His light and thereby allow for the possibility of evil.[43] If nothing but good were possible, it would produce no benefit. To use the Talmudic metaphor, it would be like carrying a lamp in broad daylight.[44]

This is one reason why the original vessels were created in such a way that they were incapable of interacting with each other. Due to this built-in flaw, they were overwhelmed by God's light and subsequently gave birth to an outside realm where God's presence could be almost totally eclipsed.

The drama of the shattering of the vessels and their subsequent rectification as *Partzufim*, which could give as well as receive, thus serves as a spiritual blueprint for man's ability to overcome evil and become a vessel of Godliness in the world. It is only when man overcomes the concealment of the Divine in his own life that he arouses a corresponding influx of light and blessing into the spiritual universes. When man accomplishes God's will "below" he causes a parallel rectification "above."[45] The vessels are then able to receive a greater and greater revelation of light and transmit it from universe to universe. Without the shattering of the vessels, there would have been no possibility for man to choose between good and evil and thereby resemble his Creator.[46]

There is, however, an additional reason why the vessels were created flawed. It was so that the actual source of evil should be something good which has fallen. Had evil been created as an independent entity, man would not have had the ability to rectify it in the form of *Teshuvah*-Repentance. Since evil originated in the highest vessels, it could now be reelevated to this level.[47]

The Eleven Incense Spices

All evil comes from the Universe of *Tohu*, which existed before the creation of the *Partzufim*. It was at this stage, while the *Sefirot* existed as simple points, that the shattering of the vessels occurred. The purpose of the shattering, as we have seen, was to allow free will to exist. Without a realm of evil it would be impossible to choose between good and evil.

In discussing the death of the Kings of Edom, we pointed out that the shattering of the vessels began with the *quasi*-Sefirah of *Da'at*-Knowledge. The first three *Sefirot*, *Keter*, *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, did not shatter because they fulfilled their primary function to a certain extent. Because they were able to cooperate with each other in bringing the lower *Sefirot* to a stage of independent existence, they were merely reduced.[48] The eight *Sefirot* from *Da'at* to *Malkhut*, however, did

not fulfill their primary function. As a result, they were overwhelmed and shattered.

It is significant to note that this is the only time that eleven *Sefirot* are mentioned as constituting one unit. It is only in the universe of *Tohu* that *Keter*-Crown and *Da'at*-Knowledge are both present simultaneously. As we have explained, this leads to the paradoxical situation where God's knowledge of the future (*Da'at*) constrains His free will (*Keter*).

In order to rectify this and allow for the possibility of free choice, God must constrict and withdraw His *Da'at*-Knowledge from creation. This is accomplished by shattering the vessels from *Da'at* to *Malkhut*. As a result of their descent into *Beriyah*, the possibility of evil, and hence free choice, is brought into existence.

In elucidating this point, the Ari identifies these eleven *Sefirot* of *Tohu* with the eleven incense spices of the Torah (Exodus 30:34).[49] The incense consisted of ten spices or perfumes with good fragances, and an eleventh spice, galbanum, with a vile odor. These spices were each ground separately and then blended together to be used in the Temple. Since these eleven spices parallel the eleven *Sefirot* of the Universe of *Tohu*, they are therefore said to represent the complete rectification of evil. This is indicated by the addition of the eleventh spice, galbanum, which alludes to the elevation of evil back into the realm of the holy.[50]

The Talmud teaches that Moses was taught the mystery of the incense by the Angel of Death.[51] It is for this reason that when a plague broke out among the Israelites in the wilderness Moses ordered Aaron to walk through the camp with the incense.[52] This is the concept that the eleven perfumes have the power to overcome death and evil.[53]

Following the idea of the ten fragrant spices and the single unpleasant one, the Talmud states: "Every fast that does not include sinners of Israel is not a fast."[54] This is derived from the fact that the incense included galbanum. Just as the galbanum was necessary to give the other spices exactly the right fragrance, a congregation is not complete without someone who has also fallen and who must reelevate himself through repentance. In particular, when a difficult punishment has been decreed against Israel because of some evil deed, this very evil must be taken and elevated. Thus, the idea of transforming evil by elevating it back to its source in holiness is intimated in the incense. It is for this reason also that a fast must include "the sinners of Israel."

Adam and Eve

The reason why fasting is an accepted mode of approaching God is that the first sin had to do with eating. Therefore, the rectification of

the first sin is achieved by not eating. Adam and Eve ate from the *Etz HaDa'at* (Tree of Knowledge). Therefore, whenever you are fasting to rectify the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, you have to include *Da'at*. *Da'at* is the first of the fallen *Sefirot*, the first of the broken vessels.[55]

It would be useful to reiterate at this point that the ten *Sefirot* parallel the Ten Sayings of creation. The eleventh saying of creation was introduced by God's statement that "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). The other ten sayings were followed by the assertion that it was good. Only the eleventh saying begins with the words "not good." Hence, the ten sayings parallel the ten *Sefirot* or the ten good incense spices and the eleventh one parallels *Da'at* or the galbanum. The statement "It is not good for man to be alone" was supposed to be rectified by *Da'at*-Knowledge, as in the verse "Adam knew (*yada*) Eve his wife" (Genesis 4:1). Instead, Adam and Eve's desire "to know good and evil" (Genesis 3:5) initiated the human parallel to the shattering of the vessels.[56]

In our analogy of the king and his son, the prostitute was following the king's orders, as was the snake in the case of Adam and Eve. This brings us to the question of the snake's guilt. The Baal Shem Tov deals with this question by first of all quoting a seemingly straightforward teaching from the Talmud.[57] The Talmud asks why someone who slaughters an animal on the Sabbath is penalized. One answer is that he is committing the sin of dyeing, since the animal's skin and fur will become dyed by the blood. Another answer is simply that he is taking the animal's life and it is for this reason that he is guilty of violating the Sabbath.[58]

The Baal Shem Tov pursues the deeper meaning of this passage by pointing out that the Ultimate Future is called a "World where all is Sabbath."[59] It is then that the Evil Urge will be judged and sentenced to death.[60] But again, why should it be punished, since it was created for this very purpose? One must say that it is punished because it pretends to be the Good Urge. The Talmud thus asks, "The slaughterer,[61] namely, the Evil Urge who is also identified with the Angel of Death,[62] why is he guilty? Because he colors the truth and disguises himself as the Good Urge and thereby takes a person's soul."

The serpent thus first approached Eve with a very sophisticated argument. In tempting her, he said, "On the day that you eat of [the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil]... you shall be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). On its surface, this is a very enigmatic statement. The serpent was implying that the way to be like God was not to focus on the specific command not to partake of the tree, but rather on the fact that God Himself knows good and evil.

But as we discussed earlier, the goal of man's creation was that he should strive to emulate God. The paradigm for this is the Sabbath where the Torah says that you should work six days and rest on the seventh, just as God did.[63] Hence, in the commandment of observing the Sabbath, the Torah is telling us to emulate God.

According to the serpent, the same principle was to be applied here.[64] He therefore argued that since God Himself was the Creator of evil, He therefore "knew good and evil." If Eve were to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, she, too, would "know good and evil," and in this way would resemble God. The serpent contended that in doing this Eve would fulfill God's purpose in creation, since she would be emulating Him.

It is difficult at first to understand Eve's motives in disobeying God's specific commandment to abstain from eating the fruit. The snake pointed out, however, that God is totally independent.[65] It follows then, that in order to completely emulate God she had to assert her independence.

In addition, we can take note that initially the snake was not formed as an animal. The Talmud discusses the appearance of the snake before its punishment, pointing out that at that time it walked completely upright, like a human being.[66] As a result of this it believed that it could take Adam's place and marry Eve.[67] The snake's argument, on the other hand, was a cover up for his real intention. He tried to convince Eve that the real way of reaching the highest level — that of doing God's will — was disobedience.

One could still point out, though, that one does not fulfill God's purpose by violating His express word. Going against God's will was an illogical thing to do. We mentioned the tension between *Keter* and *Da'at*. Whereas *Keter* is above logic, *Da'at* could be called applied logic. Eve should have known that this commandment came from *Keter*, which is above logic. She ignored it, however, because she wanted *Da'at*. In fact, by eating it, she lost *Da'at*.

Pursuing the analogy of the prostitute, let us assume that the prince is totally loyal. Let us say that this prostitute now tells the prince that if he really wants to be loyal he should be with her, because that is truly what his father wants. The test is no longer one of loyalty. It then becomes a mental game, which is not what the king had in mind.

The *Zohar* and the *Bahir* both point out that, after all, the snake was an angel.[68] In other words, behind the snake was a spiritual being, who is supposed to want only to accomplish God's will. How then could the snake have gone further than he was supposed to?

One possible answer is that there are times when angels do go beyond what they are supposed to do; thus, they sin and become fallen angels.[69] Yet, we are taught that an angel does not have an evil inclination.[70] How then, can an angel sin? The answer is that an angel could sin in his desire to get closer to God.[71] An angel may want to do God's will even more than he was told to, and sometimes he can make a mistake in such a case. Similarly, the snake's mission was to tempt. In its desire to excel in its task, it went beyond the permitted.

The insidious argument of the snake underlies the philosophy of Amalek, who claimed that one could reach the highest holiness by disobeying God and fighting against Him. That is why, as soon as the Jews came out of Egypt, Amalek attacked them. That was also the philosophy of the builders of the Tower of Babel, who said they were going to go up to heaven to fight God. In all these cases, the very independence and free will with which God endows man in order to attain his own perfection, are used to fight God.

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821) stresses that the Evil Urge, represented by the serpent, was not part of Adam before he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, but something external.[72] As sophisticated as the serpent's argument was, Adam was on a much higher level and could therefore easily distinguish between truth and falsehood.[73] It was only after he ate from the tree that he lost this ability and could succumb to the serpent's temptation. Evil had now become an integral part of his being and could play on his weaknesses from within.

It is thus highly significant that the one thing Adam and Eve were forbidden from eating was the Tree of *Da'at*-Knowledge of Good and Evil. As we have explained, the concept of *Da'at* is one of connection and attachment to the Divine. By definition, *Da'at* implies the overcoming of barriers and the absence of evil. When, however, good and evil are joined within us, the ability to distinguish between them is greatly impaired. This is why eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is the human parallel to the shattering of the vessels. Before this, man's choice between good and evil was really no choice at all. It was only at the moment that evil became internalized in man that his battle with evil became as much a battle with himself as one against an external force. It was now a force that man could overcome only with the greatest difficulty.[74]

A question that presents itself in any discussion of Adam and Eve is whether Adam would have been punished if he had repented from his sin. Adam's reaction when God faced him with his sin was rather brazen. He said: "The woman that You gave to be with me, she gave me what

I ate from the tree" (Genesis 3:12). Eve's reply was more humble. She confessed that the snake had essentially seduced her. Later, when Cain was judged by God for his murder of Abel, he exclaimed that his sin was too great for him to bear.[75] As he confessed his sin and repented, he was not killed, but received a lighter punishment. Commenting on this scene, the *Midrash*[76] states that Adam saw Cain return and inquired, surprised, as to the reason why Cain's punishment was not heavier. When told that Cain's repentance had brought God's mercy upon him, Adam lamented his own lack of repentance which might have obtained God's forgiveness.

Prompted by this realization, Adam exclaimed: "*Mizmor shir le'yom HaShabbath*; *tov lehodot laShem*" (Psalms 92:1). The translation usually given for this is: "A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath day; it is good to thank the Lord." According to the *Midrash*, however, the word *lehodot* is not used here in the sense of "to thank," but rather "to confess" or "to admit your guilt" to God.[77] Adam thus realized that true repentance must involve confessing one's sin before God.[78] As the Baal Shem Tov explains, this is because all of man's deeds, even his sins, contain sparks from the broken vessels. When a person confesses, he removes these sparks from the realm of evil and elevates them back to their source.[79]

Sincere repentance has the power to return everything to its source and unite man with his Creator.[80] The Talmud thus states an overriding rule: "Nothing can stand before a person's repentance."[81] No matter what sin a person may have committed, no matter what a terrible life he may have led, if he repents, his *Teshuvah*-Repentance can rectify everything.

In fact, it is for this reason that this psalm is dedicated to the Sabbath. The word *HaShabbath* (השבת) shares the same root letters as *Teshuvah* (תשובה). As we have seen, the World to Come is called a "World which is all Sabbath," where all evil will be rectified. This is because the whole concept of the Sabbath is the return of everything to its Source.[82]

Inmediately after the story of Cain and Abel, the Torah states, "Adam knew his wife again and she gave birth to... Seth" (Genesis 4:25). The Torah then goes on to reiterate something that had already been said: "On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female. He blessed them and named them Man (Adam)" (Genesis 5:1-2).[83] By knowing his wife again, Adam was showing that his repentance was complete.[84] He was now ready to receive the blessing of being like God by uniting with Eve.

It is for this reason that the Torah is able to write in the very next verse: "Adam lived 130 years and he had a son in his likeness and form whom he named Seth" (Genesis 5:3). According to tradition, Adam was totally depressed in the wake of his sin for all of 130 years.[85] It is only after he saw Cain repent that he realized his mistake and was able to elevate some of the sparks of holiness that had fallen as a result of his sin.[86] By stating that Seth was born in Adam's likeness, the Torah is indicating that he was on an extremely high level.[87] In the language of the *Midrash*, Seth was born circumcised just as his father had been before the sin.[88] We are being told that, to the extent that it was possible, Adam and Eve were able to rectify what they had done wrong. Their *Teshuvah* was thus the human parallel to the *Tikkun*-Rectification of *Atzilut*.[89]

Chapter 11: PARTZUFIM

The Spiritual Blueprint

This chapter involves some difficult concepts. Before we start developing this subject, we should quickly review the terminology and the interrelationships. For the comprehension of this subject, it would be best for the reader to master this before going on to the explanation that follows. Originally, there were ten *Sefirot*. When these ten are divided into five groups, we have: a) *Keter*, b) *Chokhmah*, c) *Binah*, d) the next six, and e) *Malkhut*. As we discussed, these five divisions parallel the letters of God's Name. *Keter* is the little point or apex on top of the *Yod* (*Kutzo shel Yod*), the *Yod* itself is *Chokhmah*, the initial *Heh* is *Binah*, the *Vav* is the next six because the numerical value of *Vav* is six, and the final *Heh* is *Malkhut*.[1]

This division of the *Sefirot* into five represents the root of all fives. For example, it explains why there are five levels of the soul, five universes and even five books of the Torah.[2] When they are rectified of the evil resulting from the shattering, each of these five groups of *Sefirot* becomes an archetypal persona, a *Partzuf*.[3]

The basic idea of a *Partzuf* involves the concept of "awakening from below."[4] As *Partzufim*, the *Sefirot* must earn what they are given by giving as well as receiving. This is the mystery of all *Tikkun*-Rectification. When light is given to the *Sefirot* without any participation on their part, they shatter. It is only when they are rebuilt in the image of man, which includes male and female, giving and receiving, that they can endure.[5]

Thus, a *Partzuf* is characterized by its ability to combine disparate elements into a unified whole. It is for this reason that a *Partzuf Shalem* (Complete Persona) contains ten *Sefirot*. In addition, the Kabbalists speak of the *Partzufim* as consisting of 248 limbs and 365 nerves and veins, thus further paralleling the actual physical structure of a human being.[6] Through the *Partzufim*, we have a spiritual counterpart of every human aspiration, every human emotion, and every human action. This is one of the reasons why the *Partzufim* exist: so that man can exist and have a spiritual root in *Atzilut*.

Each of the five groups of *Sefirot* thus develops into a *Partzuf*. *Keter* becomes *Arikh Anpin*, which means "Long Face." It parallels

the Hebrew expression *Erekh Apaim* (Exodus 34:6), which can be translated "Slow to Anger." As we will discuss further, *Keter* also becomes *Atik Yomin*, "Ancient of Days." *Chokhmal* becomes *Abba*, "Father." *Binah* becomes *Ima*, "Mother." The next six — *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* — become *Zer Anpin*, "Small Face." Finally, *Malkhut* becomes *Nukva* of *Zer Anpin*, the female of *Zer Anpin*. *Nukva* is the Aramaic term for the Hebrew *Nekevah*, feminine, referring to *Zer Anpin's* bride. It is the ultimate feminine aspect. Even after becoming a *Partzuf*, *Nukva* is also referred to as *Malkhut*.

The terms used for the *Partzufim* are found in three of the most opaque books of the *Zohar*, the *Sifra DeTzeniuta* (Concealed Book),[7] the *Idra Rabba* (Greater Assembly)[8] and the *Idra Zuta* (Lesser Assembly).[9] These mysterious portions of the *Zohar* contain much anthropomorphic symbolism. It is here as well that the *Partzufim* are spoken of as constituting a kind of archetypal family matrix. *Arikh Anpin* is the grandfather, *Abba* and *Ima* are the father and mother, and *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva* are the children.[10] Together they contain every element necessary for creating a complete human being. Furthermore, in contrast to the primitive *Sefirot* of *Nekudim*, the system of *Partzufim* introduces us to a dynamic process that involves God's unfolding plan for creation. These *Partzufim* constantly interact with each other in an anthropomorphic manner, combining and separating, expanding and diminishing, in order to execute this plan.[11] In particular, the twin *Partzufim Zer Anpin* and *Nukva* are represented in various states of gestation, birth, nursing and finally maturity depending on their capacity to transmit Divine sustenance to the universes that lie below them.[12]

Ultimately, the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* represent different aspects of God's relationship with man and creation. Since this relationship is a dynamic one, it is best described in anthropomorphic terms which allow us to relate to God in a very human way. The truth is, however, that these anthropomorphisms are in no way meant to refer to God Himself.[13] By way of analogy, they are like a series of minute filters that God created in order to allow us to draw near to Him and still not to be obliterated by His infinite light.[14] When we now take these filters themselves and examine them, they can be seen as complex spiritual structures that are coded to perform certain specific functions. Taken all together they resemble a master computer program that contains all the information necessary to fulfill God's primary purpose of bestowing good upon man.[15]

Using the analogy of the computer, let us say that we wanted to design a man. We would first make a sketch, and then a detailed blueprint. If

we wanted to achieve more sophisticated results, we would have to build a gigantic computer that would activate literally billions of machines to execute the project. We would have to feed this computer a complete program that would include every detail of this man.

This is exactly the way the Biblical account for the creation of man reads: "*Vayibra Elohim et HaAdam BeTzalmo*" (Genesis 1:27). This is traditionally understood as "God created man *in* His image." However, the preposition *Be* can mean "in" or "with," and in this case the correct meaning is "with." The verse really means, "God made man *with* His image."

Rashi's understanding of this verse points to this conclusion. Since God cannot be described in terms of any image, "His" has the function of a possessive adjective and the verse is referring to an image God created. If you understand this Rashi correctly, he is saying that the *Tzelem*-Image is the blueprint or the prototype that God created, according to which He made man. While referring to the macrocosm in general,[16] this blueprint or prototype refers specifically to the *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*.

This is also hinted in the verse immediately preceding ours: "God said, 'Let us make man with our image and likeness'" (Genesis 1:26). God was "speaking" to all the forces of creation that He had brought into existence, namely, the *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*. Now that they had been completed, they could all participate in the creation of man, the crown of creation. It is for this reason that the verse is stated in the first person plural, indicating that man would become a microcosm of all the forces of creation.

The Divine Name *Elohim* (אלהים) mentioned here contains five letters. According to the Ari, the five letters of this Name again allude to the five *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*.[17] *Alef* would be *Arikh Anpin*. *Lamed* points to the verb *Lomed*-Learn and represents *Chokhmah-Abba*. *Heh* corresponds to the second letter of the Tetragrammaton and thus would be *Binah-Ima*. *Yod* is *Zer Anpin*, represented as a complete structure of ten *Sefirot*. Finally, the *Mem* of *Elohim* is the womb, which is *Nukva* or *Malkhut*. Thus, when the verse says, "let us make man with our image," it is referring to the inclusion of all five *Partzufim* into man's essential make-up.[18]

Specifically, the *Tzelem*-Image of *Zer Anpin* was used in the creation of man. This is indicated in the final letter of the word *BeTzalmo* (בצלמו), which can also be read as *BeTzelem Vav* (בצלם ו), that is, "with the image of *Vav*."[19] The letter *Vav* has the numerical value of six, representing the original six *Sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod* that broke and fell in the Universe of *Tohu*-Chaos. It is these six *Sefirot* that characterize the

Partzuf of *Zer* Anpin as it goes through its initial stages of gestation and nursing.[20]

Thus, we can begin to see that this *Tzelem*-Image is more than a vague prototype. Continuing with our analogy, it represents all the information put into the computer program to make a man. This program defines all the stages that a human being will have to pass through. It determines exactly how long the gestation and nursing periods will last, and at what point he will have to achieve his maximum potential through his own efforts. In short, this program contains everything needed to create a human being, although it may not look like a human being in any way whatsoever. It probably consists of a series of numbers and formulas, but it notes where each and every cell goes and what its specific function is. The point is that this very abstract result represents a human being.

Another example would be the DNA molecule which determines the genetic structure of an organism. Stretched out, the DNA double-helix would be about eight feet long and contain approximately ten billion bits of information. In this way it constitutes an extremely complex "spiritual" blueprint. In the case of *Zer Anpin*, this spiritual blueprint contains enough bits of information, not just for one man, but for every human being that would ever live.

In addition, *Zer Anpin* is created with a mirror-image feedback mechanism, *Malkhut*. This again corresponds to the double-helix formation of the DNA which allows it to alter its program according to the specific needs of its environment. In a similar way, *Zer Anpin's* twin *Partzuf* serves the function of executing God's plan for creation based on man's actions. This again is the essence of the Kabbalistic concept that before there is an "awakening from above" there must first be an "awakening from below." That is, before any spiritual sustenance is granted, there must first be some effort on the part of the recipient.

It is important to remember that a *Partzuf Shalem* (Complete Persona) must consist of a perfectly balanced configuration of ten *Sefirot*. These ten *Sefirot* represent the ten parts of the body. *Keter* is the aura that surrounds the person. *Chokhmah* and *Binah* are the two hemispheres of the brain. *Chesed* and *Gevurah* are the right and left arms, and *Tiferet* is the torso. *Netzach* and *Hod* are the two legs, and *Yesod* is the sexual organ. *Malkhut* represents the crown of the sexual organ, as well as a complete feminine counterpart of ten *Sefirot*.[21]

When we then say that *Keter* becomes *Arikh Anpin*, and *Chokhmah* and *Binah* become *Abba* and *Ima*, this means that each of these *Partzufim* begins as a complete configuration of ten *Sefirot*. *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut* are different in this respect. *Zer Anpin* begins

with six *Sefirot* and *Malkhut* begins with only one. The Ari explains that this is why these two *Partzufim* are so intimately related to man. They were created incomplete and only receive their final form of ten *Sefirot* through man's actions.[22]

All the *Partzufim* to some degree, but particularly *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut*, relate to humanity for the simple reason that they are precise spiritual parallels of man. Not only do they relate to man, but man is able to relate to them in a very human way. Any action of mine will have a direct effect on *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut*, and their actions will have an effect on me. In essence, *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut* represent God's providential direction of the universe. As we have seen, this system of Providence is very much analogous to the game of a master chess player. Any move that I make involves an immediate reaction on God's part. The entire creation is thus brought to its goal through my free will and actions. This feedback mechanism is the essence of Divine Providence and it originates in the twin *Partzufim*, *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut*.[23]

As we have seen, the Shattering of the Vessels took place primarily in those *Sefirot* that would become *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*.[24] In order to create the perfect paradigm for all human development these Vessels had first to shatter and subsequently be rectified. This process of losing the light and receiving it again through an awakening from below would then constitute the major important parallel between these two *Partzufim* and man.

This parallel is brought out most clearly in the Talmud's description of the human embryo. The Talmud teaches that before a child is born, while it is still in the womb, it has a lamp over its head with which it learns the entire Torah and sees from one end of the universe to the other. At the moment of birth, an angel strikes the child's mouth causing it to forget everything it had learnt.[25]

Thus, originally, before birth, the light is simply put into us and we do nothing to receive it. There is no awakening from below. Consequently, there is a shattering and we lose the light when we are born, just as the original Vessels shattered and retained only infinitesimal sparks of the original light. Thereafter, we have the power to build up the light on our own and it becomes ours.[26] Moreover, through an awakening from below, the entire spiritual dimension is rectified. It is through our deeds that the *Partzufim* are ultimately able to receive and transmit God's light to all the *Olamot*-Universes.[27]

Thus, although all five *Partzufim* represent the basic prototype of man, the possibility of man being the initiator of the process of *Tikkun*-

Rectification originates specifically in *Zer Anpin* and *Malkhut*. Together they constitute a complete program that makes man the focus of creation and a partner in its completion.[28]

The Ladder of Creation

We have seen that the "image" with which God created the universe had to contain the entire program for every human being that would ever live. Actually, when we follow the process of creation back even further, we find that the prototype of man does not originate in the *Partzufim*, but in *Adam Kadmon*, which is God's original will. Whereas all the *Partzufim* are in *Atzilut*, *Adam Kadmon* is above *Atzilut*. The *Partzufim* themselves are thus also reflections of this primordial image.[29]

Adam Kadmon itself is totally hidden, and only serves to receive from God, holding back His light so that it does not overwhelm creation. Even though *Adam Kadmon* is the highest conceivable element of creation, it is still infinitely lower than the Infinite Being. The *Tikuney Zohar* thus states that even though *Adam Kadmon* is the most brilliant light, it is utter darkness when compared to *Ain Sof*.[30] *Ain Sof* is the "Ultimate Nothingness" that cannot be grasped. As we have seen, this means that we have neither the words nor the mental processes with which to actually describe God or understand Him. Although we experience God and approach Him in prayer and meditation, there is simply no way that we can imagine Him.[31]

It is only through the gradual unfolding of the process of creation that we can begin to understand anything about the awesome Power that lies behind it. The truth is that God created the entire Kabbalistic universe with man in mind. It is only when He paradoxically conceals Himself in and through the entire system of *Olamot*-Universes that He is revealed to us. Without this, as human beings, we would never understand the concept of God. It would be too distant for us. It is these kinds of representations, as embodied in the *Partzufim*, that enable us to know something about God's actions. We must have some idea of God that can be expressed in human language, and it must be in a sequence that is logical to us. *Adam Kadmon* is called "*Adam*" because everything from that level down is going to work with the same logic that is hardwired into man's brain. The very fact that we can discover a fundamental axiom of nature or that we can conceive a formula describing how an electron works, means that the thought processes that go on in our minds reflect the way the real world works.[32]

These levels or stages of creation therefore fulfill two very important functions. First, by concealing God's light through successive

constrictions, they allow for the existence of countless independent creatures, culminating in man. Second, they provide man with a ladder with which he can climb to the highest spiritual rungs and thereby infuse his earthly life with greater and greater awareness of God.

Meditatively, if we did not have this built-in ladder between ourselves and God, we would end up in a spiritual *Tohu*. Similar to lifting off in a space shuttle without radar, charts and constant radio contact, we would be lost in an interplanetary void and not be able to find our destination or return to earth for a safe landing. This is true of meditation in general and even more of basic things like the belief in God's absolute unity[33] and the impossibility of depicting Him in any way whatsoever.[34] When the Kabbalists say something about God, therefore, they are referring to the spiritual blueprint or mechanism that He created as a ladder between Himself and man. They always refer to God's relationship with man through the Kabbalistic universe, never to the Infinite Being Himself.[35]

We can take this a step further. Even when referring to God's interaction with creation, we can think of Him in two distinct yet complementary ways. We can speak of God as the Creator of the universe, thus conceiving of Him as a "Being." On the other hand, we can speak of God as the creative Force that gives existence to the universe, thus conceiving of Him as an abstract "Principle." The main thing that characterizes God as a being is that we can relate to Him personally. When we view God as the Creator and Master of the universe we are ascribing anthropomorphic concepts to Him that are most fitting to an omnipotent sentient being.

The main thing that characterizes a principle, on the other hand, is that there is no place where it does not exist. This is like taking a mathematical principle such as 1 + 1 = 2. This simple equation is a good example of something that does not exist in space, and yet, at the same time, exists everywhere. This is true of every universal principle. By nature, an abstract principle is completely independent of space and time.[36]

For many reasons, therefore, it would be useful to think of God as a principle rather than a being. For one thing, it would make it readily understandable how He exists outside of space and time and yet fills all space and time. For another, an idea such as this breaks down the stereotyped anthropomorphic concepts that people have about God.

Actually, both "principle" and "being" are approximations that we use because the mind has no categories into which it can place God. It may be that a third, intermediate category would be a better approximation, but the mind has no example of it. Nevertheless, through meditation,

one can gain a glimmer of the nature of this third category. This involves a deliberate oscillation between verbal and non-verbal states of consciousness.[37] It is alluded to in the *Sefer Yetzirah's* statement that one should emulate the living angels (*Chayot*) who are constantly "running and returning" (Ezekiel 1:14). The *Yetzirah* thus says, "If your heart runs, return it to its place."[38] This means that the verbal depictive part of the mind which experiences God as a being must be bridled by knowing that God Himself is completely beyond all description. He is the ultimate "Principle" of the world, beyond all concepts of space and time.[39] In this manner, one can oscillate back and forth, reaching higher each time.[40]

Thus, when we commune with God, it is as if we are in touch with existence itself, but at the same time speaking to it as if it were a being to whom we can relate. Still, we realize that God is more than this. He is the infinite Being and absolute Principle that allows existence to be.

God's Will and Mercy

After discussing the basic principles of the *Partzufim*, we will now go into the subject in greater depth. We saw that the ten *Sefirot* are reconstituted as five primary *Partzufim*. *Keter* becomes *Arikh Anpin*, *Chokhmah* becomes *Abba*, *Binah* becomes *Ima*, the next six become *Zer Anpin*, and *Malkhut* becomes *Nukva*.

In discussing the *Sefirah* of *Keter* we saw that it is the interface between God and creation and is therefore seen as a crown. A crown is not part of the body; it is worn above the head. Yet, *Keter* is also seen as the skull or cranium which houses the brain. These two aspects of *Keter* represent two aspects of God's will or purpose in creation. In the case of the *Partzufim*, these two aspects of will become, respectively, *Atik Yomin* ("Ancient of Days"), and *Arikh Anpin* ("Long Face" or "Slow to Anger").[41]

The Partzuf of *Atik Yomin* is mentioned in the book of Daniel: "I saw the Ancient of Days sitting on a throne, His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool" (Daniel 7:9). The Kabbalists explain that the *Partzuf* of *Atik Yomin* represents God's highest purpose in creation.[42] Daniel's vision of *Atik Yomin* thus represented a very significant revelation with regard to the future fate of the Jewish People.

As we learn from the book of Daniel, he had been among the first exiles taken to Babylon.[43] This was just the first of a number of catastrophes that befell the Jewish people which culminated in the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem.[44] It was therefore of crucial importance that God reveal the meaning of these events through His prophets in

order to prevent the tiny nation from completely abandoning any hope of redemption.

The prophet Ezekiel played a major role in this drama when he revealed his vision of the Chariot. Essentially, his message to Israel was that God had not forsaken them. God was "traveling" with them in their exile and would remain with them until the end.[45]

Daniel, on the other hand, though on a lower level of prophecy than Ezekiel,[46] not only received information regarding the end of the Babylonian exile, but also of the final redemption that would take place in the End of Days.[47] His vision of the Ancient of Days was therefore intended to assure Israel that although they may not understand what was happening to them, the process of redemption was being carried out on a higher level. Exile was merely a step in the cosmic process that had been conceived even before man had been created.[48]

We have discussed the question of why God created the universe. The highest purpose that can be probed by us is that God wanted to bestow the ultimate good on His creation.

In trying to psychoanalyze *why* God wanted to do good, however, we realize that there may be a level of God's will which is known, but there is also a level which is unknown.[49] We could say, for instance, that it is God's nature to do good, but this would imply that God has restraints. As a principle, we know that nothing can place restraints on God.[50] Even if we say that God can place restraints on Himself, we still have an unknown will that transcends our understanding *why* He is placing restraints on Himself.

In essence, therefore, we see that God's will has two aspects in relation to us. On the one hand, we cannot fathom God's will because it originates at a level that completely transcends our logic. This is the level of *Atik Yomin*, the Ancient of Days, which is totally unknown and goes back before anything can be thought of. On the other hand, there is a part of God's will that operates through logic. This involves God's constricting His will so that man can have some understanding of Him. This is the level of *Arikh Anpin*, the Long Face of mercy and compassion.[51]

These two levels of *Keter* can also be seen in another way. The Ari teaches that *Keter*, which is also God's will, is the basic interface or intermediary stage between God and His creation.[52] This idea of *Keter* is a frightening but very powerful meditation. To the extent that we can express it, it means that *Keter* (God's will) is both finite and infinite, something that God created and the very thing that God uses in order to create.[53] It is this higher, "infinite," aspect of *Keter* that

is called *Atik Yomin*, the "Ancient of Days," because we cannot grasp its beginning.

As something that was definitely created, however, *Keter* is infinitely lower than the Infinite Being. It is merely an instrument that God made to perform a certain limited function. It cannot therefore be compared with the One who made it. This aspect of *Keter* is called *Arikh Anpin*, the "Long Face," because it is capable of holding God's light in such a way that creation can withstand it and benefit from it.

The paradox of the *Sefirot* or the *Partzufim* in general acting as intermediaries between God and creation or between God and man does present us with a certain problem. As mentioned, a *Sefirah* or *Partzuf* functions as a kind of filter through which the Infinite *Ain Sof* constricts Himself and relates to man. This in turn is related to an important Kabbalistic teaching that each of the *Sefirot* corresponds to one of the ten Divine Names that appear in the Bible.[54] For example, the Divine Name associated with *Keter* is *Ehyeh*.[55] When we then call God by one of His Names we are relating to His infinite essence as it is clothed in and manifests itself through a particular *Sefirah*.[56]

Nevertheless, the question arises as to whether we are relating to God through a concept of intermediaries which is foreign to Judaism? If, on the one hand, idol worship is defined as praying to intermediaries and, on the other hand, this *Sefirah* is a vehicle through which we pray to a particular manifestation of *Ain Sof*, then whether this manifestation is called *Ehyeh* or *Elohim* or any other Name,[57] there seems to be a very fine line between Judaism and idolatry.[58] What is the distinction and why is praying to God through these Names not only permitted but an essential part of the Kabbalistic system of *Yichudim*-Unifications and *Kavanot*-Directed Meditations?

Rabbi Moses Cordovero (Ramak) discusses this question at length in his *Pardes Rimonim* (Orchard of Pomegranates). He writes:[59]

> We must now explain the idea of meditating on the *Sefirot*, since there is some confusion in this area. Commenting on the verse, "Who is a great nation that has God close to them, like the Lord (*YHVH*) our God, whenever we call Him" (Deuteronomy 4:7), the *Sifri* states, "We call to Him, and not to His Attributes." This is also logical. Why should we approach the King's servants rather than the King Himself? It is certainly fitting that we pray only to the Master of all the Treasuries. This being true, why are all our prayers associated with the various *Sefirot*?... When a person thinks

about any one of the Attributes, it is inevitable that he will separate it from the rest. In his mind he imagines a separate Attribute, distinct from all the others. This is certainly not proper, since they all must be unified. This is well-known.

It is necessary to realize that the Infinite Being (*Ain Sof*), the blessed King of Kings, cannot be encompassed by any name or word. It is not correct to speak of any attribute in this Essence, since it does not change and cannot be described... Therefore, when one meditates on the Infinite Being, he should not call it *El*, or *Elo'ah*, or *Elohim* or any other name or appellation. All of these names only pertain to the *Sefirot*... His intent should not be directed to the *Sefirah* itself, but to the Infinite Essence that permeates it, is clothed in it and makes use of it.

The Ramak's enlightening reply is that when sending a message to the king, it makes a big difference how we relate to the messenger. By mistaking the messenger for the king we are taking away from the king's honor.[60] Therefore, even though God created certain *Sefirot*-Attributes with which to relate to us, they are all very much like the wires of a telephone. When calling the president, we certainly do not give respect to the wires of the phone, even though they are instrumental in delivering the message.

On a more subtle level, even the Divine Names associated with the *Sefirot* are created for our benefit. Since God is an absolute Unity, all differentiation is from our perspective and relative to our experience.[61] The Divine Names can therefore be likened to a single undifferentiated sound that is modulated to different frequencies depending on our capacity to receive it. It is only when we, as human beings, begin to conceive of the *Sefirot* as independent powers which can be manipulated in opposition to the spiritual force that flows through them that Judaism ends and idolatry begins. This is what the *Tikuney Zohar* means when it says: "You brought ten *Sefirot* into existence and it is through them that You conceal Yourself from human beings. You are the One who binds them and unifies them. And because You are within them, anyone who separates one from the other is regarded as having caused a separation in You."[62]

Returning now to our discussion of the *Partzufim* associated with *Keter*, one reason why *Arikh Anpin* is referred to as "Long Face" is because in its physical representation its beard is divided into thirteen parts. This is in distinction to the beard of *Zer Anpin*, "Small Face," which only has nine parts. These different parts of the beard are referred to as *Tikuney Dikna*, "rectifications of the beard."[63]

The *Zohar* explains that the thirteen parts of *Arikh Anpin's* beard correspond to the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy that we referred to in our discussion of *Keter*.[64] The Biblical source for the number of parts of *Arikh Anpin's* beard appears in the book of Exodus. After the sin of the Golden Calf, God proclaimed to Moses the Thirteen Attributes of His Mercy: "God (1), merciful (2), and gracious (3), slow (4) to anger (5), and abundant in love (6) and truth (7). Keeping mercy (8) to the thousandth generation (9), forgiving sin (10), rebellion (11), and error (12), and cleansing (13)" (Exodus 34:6-7).

The Attributes of Mercy are mentioned again in the Torah in the book of Numbers. After the incident of the spies who return to the wilderness with a bad report about the land of Israel, God is ready to annihilate the Jewish People because of their lack of faith even after repeated miracles. Moses prays to God in order to arouse His mercies and he quotes the words which God once declared listing the Thirteen Attributes. This time, however, Moses only mentions nine of these Attributes: "slow (1), to anger (2), abundant (3) in love (4), forgiving sin (5) and rebellion (6); cleansing those who repent (7), and not cleansing those who do not repent (8), but keeping in mind the sins of the fathers for their children, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren (9)" (Numbers 14:18).[65] The verses in the book of Exodus listing the Thirteen Attributes represent *Arikh Anpin*, and the verse in the book of Numbers listing Nine Attributes represents *Zer Anpin* which is "smaller," i.e., programmed to transmit God's mercies only in proportion to humanity's ability to receive and emulate them.[66] In addition, the hair of both *Atik Yomin* and *Arikh Anpin* is depicted as the white hair of a grandfather, while the hair of *Zer Anpin* is depicted as the black hair of a young man.[67]

Thus, the "size" and "color" of their respective beards indicate that at the level of *Arikh Anpin*, God's love and mercy are far greater than that of *Zer Anpin*. This is readily understandable when we remember that the *Partzufim* were created as intermediaries which would allow man to receive God's ultimate good through his own efforts. On the level of *Keter*, God's mercy is unmitigated and pure. Like a grandfather, His desire is to bestow the greatest good irrespective of how deserving His "grandchildren" are. For their own good, however, He constricts His mercy through the smaller *Partzuf* of *Zer Anpin* and thereby, like a parent, makes His giving dependent on His children's merit. These two modes of giving do not contradict one another. They both emanate from God's love for all His creatures.[68]

Creation and Providence

We know that God wanted to bestow the ultimate good on man. He therefore created the world in such a way that everything would lead to man. First He created the Will to create. Essentially, this Will was a complete *Partzuf* containing everything necessary to create man. Man needed free will, abstract intelligence, the ability to make logical inferences, the capacity to communicate, to create, love, give and receive. All of these would be contained in potential in this Will. This is the level of *Atik Yomin* and *Arikh Anpin* (*Keter*).[69]

Next, God created *Chokhmah-Abba* and *Binah-Ima*. These are the masculine and feminine forces of creation. On the level of *Arikh Anpin*, the feminine counterpart is subsumed within the male aspect and is not mentioned as a separate *Partzuf*.[70] In *Abba* and *Ima* we have the female emerging as a separate entity. Still, the *Zohar* refers to *Abba* and *Ima* as "two intimate friends who never part."[71] They may be two separate *Partzufim*, but they never manifest in exclusion to each other. The final stage of this development is *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*. It is here that, for the first time, the possibility of separation exists.[72] *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva* can attain the highest level of *Zivug*-Attachment, but this is only possible through mankind's actions.[73]

Whereas *Abba* and *Ima* are the masculine and feminine forces of creation, the information and the logic with which God created the universe, *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva* are the masculine and feminine forces of providence, or of God's presence in the world. We want providence and everything that happens in the world to fulfill the purpose of creation as precisely as possible. This essentially means that we are trying to fulfill God's purpose in creation through the forces of providence which involve not only God's actions towards us but His reactions to what we do.[74]

When this purpose is fulfilled through man, the ultimate feminine aspect, *Malkhut*, becomes the "crown" of her husband.[75] This means that the entire development from unity of male and female to complete separation was in order to bring the world to its goal through "awakening from below." Man only becomes the "crown of creation" when he is able to experience the greatest closeness to God through his own efforts.

The Torah

Zer Anpin has many manifestations. For instance, it is seen as the personification of the Written Torah with its 613 commandments. Just like a human being has 248 limbs and 365 nerves and veins, the Torah has 248 positive and 365 negative commandments or *Mitzvot*.[76] The Torah itself is thus also a complete *Partzuf*, and like *Zer Anpin* constitutes

the primary vehicle through which God and man interact.[77] Essentially, the way we identify with God and fulfill His Will is through the Torah. Furthermore, every time we perform one of the commandments, there is a corresponding manifestation in *Zer Anpin* which in turn changes the way *Hashgachah*-Providence is going to work. In other words, the performance of a commandment actually affects the way the Divine program will be executed. Hence, even though God's Will and His Wisdom are revealed to some extent in the Torah, the Torah itself corresponds to the level of *Zer Anpin*.[78]

Referring to the *Partzuf Nukva*, the *Tikuney Zohar* states, "*Malkhut* is the mouth. It is therefore called the Torah of the mouth (Oral Torah)."[79] Thus, while God's Will is manifest through *Zer Anpin* which parallels the Written Torah, the only way we understand what the Torah is really saying to us is through an accompanying set of oral instructions. This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement that without an Oral Torah we would be unable to read the Torah or know what its words mean.[80]

The Parent-Child Relationship

We will now analyze the relationship between *Abba* and *Ima*, and *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*. A cursory examination of the *Etz Chaim* or the *Idrot* which discuss the *Partzufim* shows that many of the symbolisms are highly sexual. The connection between *Abba* and *Ima* is referred to as *Zivug*, which literally means sexual union or attachment: this is a symbolism that we will find throughout the discussion of the *Partzufim*.

As the Ari describes it, there is an entire process by which *Zer Anpin* is born. It starts with a kiss between *Abba* and *Ima*, which then develops into a *Zivug*.[81] We understand of course that these relationships have a very deep symbolic meaning. The Song of Songs, for instance, begins with the verse "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His lips." To the Kabbalists, a kiss symbolizes the meeting of minds, whereas a *Zivug* represents the melting of bodies, of total essence.[82]

Abba and *Ima* come together and *Ima* becomes pregnant with *Zer Anpin*; she carries him, gives birth to him and nurses him. She then becomes pregnant a second time, the second pregnancy being not a physical but rather a mental pregnancy which develops *Zer Anpin's Mochin*, his personality, and *Nukva de Zer Anpin*, who is his sister.[83]

Zer Anpin and *Nukva* are thus brother and sister but their relationship culminates in their becoming bride and groom as well. This is the concept of *Achoti Kallah*, "my sister, my bride" that we find throughout the Song of Songs.[84] It represents the highest level of *Zivug*-Attachment that can

exist between a man and a woman, because among other things, *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva* are paradigmatic human beings. The only difference is that on the level of *Atzilut* the *Zivug* of *Achoti Kallah* is permitted, while for human beings it is strictly forbidden.[85] Thus, in *Derekh Mitzvotekha* from the *Tzemach Tzedek* (Rabbi Menachem Mendell of Lubavitch 1789-1866), we find that the reason the Torah prohibits this brother-sister relationship is because it is so holy that human beings dare not do it.[86] According to the Kabbalah, therefore, when Abraham and Isaac both called their wives "sister,"[87] they meant it in the sense of *Achoti Kallah*. They were indicating that their relationships with their wives, Sarah and Rebecca, were exact counterparts to that of *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*. They were really telling a spiritual truth rather than a physical one.[88]

Returning to the relationship between *Abba* and *Ima* and *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*, we can see that it is a paradigm of the parent-children relationship. In discussing the *Sefirah* of *Malkhut* we alluded to the Kabbalistic rule that *Chokhmah-Abba* is intimately related to *Malkhut-Nukva*, while *Binah-Ima* is associated with the original six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin*.[89] The interactions between all these *Partzufim* show what the perfect balance in such relationships should be. Every child has the potential to be a perfect human being, and the more a parent can assist in the process, the closer the child will come to realizing this potential.

For example, in the case of *Ima* and *Zer Anpin* we see a mother relating to her son, or in other words, certain *Sefirot* of *Ima* relating to certain *Sefirot* in *Zer Anpin*.[90] We see the balance between *Netzach* and *Hod* in the mother-son relationship: *Netzach*, controlling the child, and *Hod*, giving in to the child's personality. This balance must be a perfect balance. If the mother has a tendency toward *Hod* and gives in too much, the child becomes spoiled. If she leans toward *Netzach*, oppressiveness, the child will become a very timid and insecure person. If she has the correct balance of *Netzach* and *Hod*, the child will have enough self-discipline without lacking security. This is just one illustration of the ideal mother-child relationship, as seen by the Ari. One could almost write a manual on how to raise children from conception on, using exclusively the *Etz Chaim* as a source, and it would produce extremely well-adjusted children.

In any discussion of *Zer Anpin*, it is essential to understand that every person has some masculine as well as feminine in him, and so, one really relates to both *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*. (To avoid duplication, therefore, when we say *Zer Anpin* we are referring to both *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*.) One can identify with *Zer Anpin* not only as a *Partzuf*, but as

Zer Anpin who was conceived and born, was nursed, grew up and developed his personality — *Mochin de Katnut* and *Mochin de Gadlut*, immature mentalities and mature mentalities.[91] These mentalities are seen as lower and higher levels of consciousness. We know that in the realm of *Atzilut* there is no element of time. Hence, one can identify with any level of *Zer Anpin*, every manifestation from pregnancy to birth, to weaning, and to childhood, because all these levels exist at any given time. Thus, one can first identify with *Mochin de Katnut*, the immature mentalities of *Zer Anpin*, which are the lower levels of consciousness, or one can identify with *Mochin de Gadlut*, the higher levels of consciousness, which are the mature mentalities of *Zer Anpin*.[92]

It is interesting that the lower levels of consciousness, *Mochin de Katnut*, are seen as being in the throat, whereas the higher levels, *Mochin de Gadlut*, are seen as being in the head.[93] This brings us to wonder, why should the Kabbalists see *Mochin de Katnut* as being in the throat? In our normal, everyday level of thinking, we almost vocalize our thoughts. It is possible then, that one of the first ways of getting into the higher levels of consciousness is to learn how to think with our head and not with our vocal cords or our mouth.

One of the very enigmatic sections of the *Sefer Yetzirah* is where it breaks the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet into five phonetic families or groupings: Gutturals (אחהע) in the throat, Palatals (גיכק) in the palate, Linguals (דטלנת) in the tongue, Dentals (זסשרץ) in the teeth, and Labials (בומפ) in the lips.[94] The most obvious reason for the five phonetic families would be so that the divisions of the alphabet should be parallel to the divisions in the five-dimensional continuum defined by the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[95] Another possibility is that this might have been an exercise to learn how to gain awareness of what happens when one is making various sounds. It might also be involved with disjoining thought from speech. If one uses a certain name or word as a mantra, for instance, one gains a totally different awareness of it. In other words, the sound of one's voice repeating the name over and over again increases one's level of awareness and allows him to move from a verbal to a non-verbal mode of consciousness.[96] The *Sefer Yetzirah* thus says, "Twenty-two Foundation Letters; Engrave them with voice," i.e., pronounce each letter of these five families. "Carve them with breath," i.e., concentrate on the breath that is exhaled while it is pronounced. "Set them in the mouth in five places," i.e., meditate on the place in the mouth with which the letter is pronounced. In such a way one can disengage his entire thought process from his speech centers and move from a constricted state of consciousness to an expanded one.

The Power of Teshuvah

Before ending the discussion on *Partzufim*, it is important to remember that *Zer Anpin* starts with six *Sefirot* and ends as a *Partzuf Shalem*, a complete *Partzuf* with all ten *Sefirot*. Similarly, *Nukva* de *Zer Anpin* starts with a single *Sefirah* and ends up with a full complement of ten.[97] According to the Ari, this process is paralleled by the ten days between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* which are referred to as the ten days of *Teshuvah*-Repentance. It is during these ten days that one actually rectifies all ten *Sefirot* in both *Zer Anpin* and *Nukva*.[98] This in turn is a preparation for their ultimate union which takes place immediately following *Yom Kippur*, on *Succot*.

The process of *Teshuvah* is closely related to the process of healing. This is brought out in Rabbi Nachman's story of the Seven Beggars. The sixth beggar in this story tells of a princess who was wounded by ten arrows until she fell unconscious. It is only because the sixth beggar has the ability to shoot all these arrows and retrieve them that he can heal the princess.

The princess represents *Nukva de Zer Anpin* and is also identified as *Knesset Yisrael*, the totality of the souls of Israel, and *Shekhinah*, the indwelling presence of God in the world. The ten types of arrows denote ten types of spiritual damage. There is an arrow for each of the *Sefirot* that pierces a person and wounds him every time he commits a sin.

The sixth beggar represents the *Tzadik*, the righteous human being who can undo the damage done by sin and rectify it at its root.[99] This is connected to the fact that the *Tzadik* understands that evil is necessary if there is to be free will and free choice in the world. This parallels his ability to shoot the arrows.[100] But once evil exists, there must be a way of rectifying it through repentance. This is the concept of retrieving the arrows.

God thus gave us ten days of repentance between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* in order to heal the wounds of the ten arrows. Since these arrows make us fall unconscious and diminish our ability to experience God, we need these ten days to remove each arrow and renew our connection with Him on a higher level.

The final stage in our repentance and the true rectification of evil involves transforming it into good.[101] This is accomplished through joy. This brings us to the festival following *Yom Kippur*, *Succot*, which represents the concept of joy.[102] On *Succot*, after rectifying our deepest relationship with God, we radiate joy.

The difference between *Succot* and *Pesach* is that on *Pesach* the

Mitzvah enters you through eating the *Matzah*. During *Succot*, on the other hand, you enter into the *Succah* and are surrounded by the *Mitzvah*.[103] *Pesach* is thus the rectification of one's *Penimi*-inner space and *Succot* is the rectification of one's *Makif*-outer space. This refers to the *Succah* itself as well as to the palm (*lulav*), myrtle (*hadas*), willow (*aravah*) and citron (*etrog*), the four species of plants that we take on the festival and wave in all six directions.[104] These six directions constitute our outer space, while our standing in the middle is our *Malkhut*, our inner space. Since our outer space tends to be diffused and disjoined, the purpose of waving the four species is seen as drawing down the six masculine *Sefirot* into *Malkhut*.[105] According to the Ari, therefore, the waving goes in the following order: South-right-*Chesed*; North-left-*Gevurah*; East-forward-*Tiferet*; Up-*Netzach*; Down-*Hod*; West-back-*Yesod*.[106] In *Malkhut* we integrate the six directions into our inner space.

The *Mitzvah* of the Four Species itself alludes to the six masculine *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin* and the feminine *Sefirah* of *Nukva*. The three *Hadasim* represent *Chesed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferet*; the two *Aravot* are *Netzach* and *Hod*; the *Lulav* is *Yesod*, and the *Etrog* is *Malkhut*.[107] In binding the *Hadasim* and *Aravot* to the *Lulav* we are pointing to the necessity of perfecting our ability to give through *Yesod*. When we then join these species with the *Etrog*, it represents the ultimate union of heaven and earth, of God and creation, of *Zer Anpin* and the *Shekhinah*.[108]

Chapter 12: ADAM KADMON

In Chapter Three we described three aspects of *Adam Kadmon*.[1] The highest aspect of *Adam Kadmon* involves the profound concept of God's Will as the *Shoresh*-Source in *Ain Sof* for the totality of creation. This means that, relative to God Himself, *Adam Kadmon* is finite. It is, in fact, the very "will to finiteness" that God brought into existence in order to constrict His infinite essence and create a finite world. The paradox is that this will or possibility of finiteness was totally subsumed in God's infinite essence until He decided to reveal it.[2] It is for this reason that *Adam Kadmon* serves as a kind of interface between the Infinite Creator and the finite creation. It is the will to finiteness that God used to initiate the entire process of creation. Still, at its highest level, it is completely unfathomable and ineffable and has no separate existence. It is completely attached to and united with the Infinite *Ain Sof* that brought it into existence.

The second aspect of *Adam Kadmon* involves the concept of God's Will as it is clothed within creation.[3] We have discussed the entire system of *Olamot*-Universes as so many garments that serve both to conceal and reveal the powerful light of *Ain Sof*. [4] Although *Adam Kadmon* is infinitely lower than *Ain Sof*, nevertheless, its primary function is to hold back God's light so that it does not overwhelm creation. [5] Thus, at the innermost level of reality and permeating all of creation, is the immanent light of *Ain Sof*. The first "garment" over this light is that of *Adam Kadmon*.[6] Next comes *Atzilut*, which is infinitely lower than *Adam Kadmon*, and then *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*.[7] Only the light of *Ain Sof* clothed within *Adam Kadmon* fills the entire Kabbalistic universe.

The third aspect of *Adam Kadmon* is the product of the combined action of the first two. We saw that the term *Adam Kadmon* literally means "primordial man," and refers to God's deepest motive and purpose to create the world as a stage for man.[8] This means that the entire process of creation, from the first *Tzimtzum* to the primitive *Sefirot*, the Shattering of the Vessels, the existence of Evil, and the resurrection of the *Partzufim* in the image of man, was set into motion because God wanted to create man as the recipient of His ultimate good.[9] The concept of *Adam Kadmon* thus provides the background for

everything that happens in the Kabbalistic universe. The totality of creation was contained in God's Will, the first aspect of *Adam Kadmon*. It is constantly directed toward its goal by God's Purpose, the third aspect of *Adam Kadmon*. Finally, it is God's Will that permeates all of creation; this is the second aspect of *Adam Kadmon* that serves as a mechanism to bring God's Will to fruition.

An alternate term for *Adam Kadmon* is the Universe of Splendors or *Tzachtzachot*.[10] Alluding to the light that the righteous will behold in the World to Come, the Prophet Isaiah says, "He will satisfy your soul with Splendors (*Tzachtzachot*)... Then you will delight in the Lord" (Isaiah 58:11, 14). The Kabbalists explain that this delight will be made possible because the *Tzachtzachot* will actually act as a barrier to enable the soul to withstand God's light without becoming totally nullified.[11] As we have seen, this is the exact function ascribed to *Adam Kadmon*. It only serves to hold back God's light so that it does not overwhelm creation.[12]

Rabbi Nachman explains that this universe of *Tzachtzachot* or *Adam Kadmon* is so totally beyond our present comprehension that we cannot conceive of it. It is unreachable and unknowable and the human intellect cannot grasp it except when it is reflected in the lower universes. Nevertheless, its light can fill us with the most sublime feelings of delight and satisfaction.[13] It is a feeling that goes beyond consciousness. For this reason, it is associated with the level of the soul that parallels *Adam Kadmon, Yechidah*.[14]

We discussed the five levels of the soul and how they parallel the five universes. Beginning at the lowest level of the soul, there is *Nefesh, Ruach* and *Neshamah* which parallel *Asiyah, Yetzirah* and *Beriyah* and constitute the *Penimi*-inner space of the universes and ourselves. Then come *Chayah* and *Yechidah*, which parallel *Atzilut* and *Adam Kadmon* and function as *Makifim*-enveloping lights.[15] The soul always relates to the inner dimension of reality, the *reason* why everything exists.[16] In *Atzilut* and *Adam Kadmon*, however, the inner and outer levels of reality are still one.[17] On the level of *Atzilut* the soul is therefore called *Chayah*-Life Essence, because the only thing you experience there is life itself, the consciousness of being alive. On the level of *Adam Kadmon*, the soul is called *Yechidah*-Unique Essence, because you have gone beyond consciousness itself to complete unity. This is the level of *Tzachtzachot*.

In describing God's interaction with creation, the Bible refers to various Divine "senses" such as seeing, hearing, and even smelling. We have already seen that one of the main tasks of the Kabbalah tradition was to allow us to interpret these anthropomorphisms. It is universally

agreed that they are to be understood allegorically rather than literally. The problem, however, is that few people understand what the allegory alludes to or the various substrata of meaning that are represented in these anthropomorphisms. The dynamic structure of the Kabbalah provides us with the keys to understand the inner meaning of such expressions as "God's eyes" or "God's ears." Generally speaking, they refer to the *Sefirot*, the *Partzufim*, or even the *Olamot* that correspond to these parts of the body. On a deeper level, however, since the *Sefirot* are extensions or details of God's Will, these expressions also have their counterparts in *Adam Kadmon*.[18]

Thus, in terms of God's primeval desire to create man, there are also various levels of interaction that are seen as precursors of the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*. These are referred to metaphorically as *Adam Kadmon*'s eyes, ears, nose and mouth. These "senses" constitute a step-down system of windows or lenses that diminishes the light of *Ain Sof* as it flows through *Adam Kadmon* into the universes.[19] They represent the creation of four primary modes of interaction (seeing, hearing, smelling and speaking) that parallel the four letters of the Tetragrammaton and which will be revealed at a lower level as the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*.[20] Thus, *Adam Kadmon*'s eyes are related to the *Yod* of the Tetragrammaton and *Chokhmah-Abba*. The ears are related to the first *Heh* and *Binah-Ima*. The nose is related to the *Vav* and the original six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin*. The mouth is related to the final *Heh* and hence to *Malkhut*.[21]

Seeing is primarily associated with the gathering of information. We do not see understanding, but rather concepts. *Chokhmah* is the world of concepts. Thus, we essentially see the world of *Chokhmah*. To some degree, we receive information through all our senses, but sight is primary in *Chokhmah*.[22]

Hearing is related to *Binah* and hence logic. This is indicated by the fact that we can only hear one thing at a time. Unlike the eye which can span an entire landscape in seconds, the ear cannot hear an entire symphony all at once. The sounds have to be broken up in order for us to be able to hear anything. This connection is alluded to by the fact that there are important linkages from the hearing centers to the logical centers of the brain. A process of logic exists in sight also, as in the case of reading, which is kind of a verbal logic. Sight, however, primarily involves comprehensive gathering of information, whereas hearing involves interpreting that information and breaking it down into its logical categories.[23]

Smelling is related to the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton and the original

six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin*.[24] Since these *Sefirot* are generally associated with character traits or emotions such as love, fear, beauty, dominance, empathy and giving, the obvious question is, what is the connection with the sense of smell? It is interesting to note, however, that scientists have shown that the nerves coming from the brain's smell center are linked to the emotional centers of the brain. This is based on the fact that the sense of smell is more highly developed in lower animals than it is in man. This explains the strange connection between the *Korbanot*-Offerings and the Divine emotions: God is said to smell the *Re'ach Nicho'ach*, "pleasant fragance" of an offering, and to feel joyful appeasement.[25] Actually the Hebrew word *Nicho'ach* is related to the root *Nachach* denoting rest and serenity, so that the expression may be translated "a fragrance inducing serenity."[26] This goes along with the fact that the eleven incense spices that were burnt in the Temple produced a fragrance that was particularly suited for entering the meditative state that led to prophecy.[27]

Speaking is related to the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton and hence to *Malkhut*. There are references to the sense of taste in Kabbalah.[28] The main function of the mouth, however, is seen as *Dibbur*-Speech.[29] This is brought out in the account of creation when God breathed a *Nishmat Chaim*-breath of life into man's nostrils so that he became a *Nefesh Chayah*-living soul (Genesis 2:7). The *Targum Onkelos* interprets this expression by translating it *Ruach Memallela* ("speaking spirit").[30] He is informing us that the main thing that distinguishes man as a higher being is his ability to speak. The primary function of the mouth in Kabbalah is therefore always one of communication through speech.

As we have seen, speech is usually related to the level of *Ruach* or the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton.[31] Here, however, it is associated with the mouth of *Adam Kadmon* which parallels the level of *Nefesh* or the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton. One possible explanation is that the unification of the *Vav* and the *Heh* is often depicted in terms of the combined action of the voice together with the mouth.[32] On the level of *Ruach* we are capable of changing the inflections of our voices, but the organ that performs the essential function of creating intelligible syllables and words is the mouth. Speech is thus a combination of both these levels.[33]

We mentioned that *Adam Kadmon*'s senses can be likened to a system of windows through which *Ain Sof* illuminates creation. In a human being, mind interacts with matter through sight, hearing, smell, speech and of course touch. It is conceivable that the relation between mind and matter is a reflection of the interaction between *Ain Sof* and creation

via *Adam Kadmon*. In the case of *Adam Kadmon*, however, the senses are not only the vehicles through which God interacts with creation, but the means through which He brings the basic concepts of creation into existence.

For example, the Psalmist says, "Forever, O God, Your word stands in the heavens" (Psalms 119:89). The Baal Shem Tov explains that "Your word" refers to the saying "God said, 'There shall be a firmament in the midst of the waters'" (Genesis 1:6). The words and letters of this saying stand and remain forever within the firmament of the heavens, giving them existence. If they would be removed, even for an instant, everything would revert to nothingness.[34]

Looking at another saying, the Torah writes, "God said, 'There shall be light,' and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good" (Genesis 1:3). In this instance as well we see God literally speaking the physical universe into existence. On a deeper level, however, we are being told that when God speaks, He is creating the concept of speech. When God sees, hears or smells, He is creating the concepts of seeing, hearing and smelling.

Meditatively, this idea can open up a whole new understanding of our own senses. If it were possible to get yourself into a type of *Adam Kadmon* consciousness, almost getting outside your own thought processes, this would be a level where you would be perceiving your senses. In your normal consciousness, for instance, you are aware of seeing, but you are not aware of your own sight, of the process of seeing. You are unable to rise above seeing and almost see your sight or hear your hearing. The account of creation provides us with an example. We have "God saw the light." This statement appears strange because, usually, you see with light; you do not see light. At the level of *Adam Kadmon*, however, this is essentially what happens. Not only are these senses being used, but they are being created as they are being used. In the case of light, therefore, God saw the concept of seeing.[35]

At certain times of your life, you may have a sensation of reaching this high state of consciousness. As Rabbi Nachman points out, however, it is an experience of "touching, yet not touching."[36] Once you have almost reached it, you cannot hold on to it and must return. This is also referred to as *Ratzo VaShov*, the "running and returning" of the *Chayot* of Ezekiel's vision.[37] Not only is it impossible to hold on to the experience, but although you know you have had it, you cannot even remember exactly what happened. It is an experience above thought which you are aware of having experienced although you cannot consciously think about it. Like a *deja vu* experience with another person, you know that

you have met before but it completely escapes you for the moment where and when it could have been. In fact, part of the discipline of a prophet is the ability to recapture a spiritual experience that seemingly defies conscious recall. A prophet must therefore learn to enter higher states of consciousness, but his main task at that point is to bring something down with him.[38]

We have seen that the four senses of *Adam Kadmon* are like external apertures that serve to dilate and constrict the powerful light of *Ain Sof*. It is in this sense that they parallel the four letters of the Tetragrammaton itself which represent four primary stages in the diminution of God's light. As we now go higher up and enter into the universe of *Adam Kadmon*, we encounter two additional sets of four levels each.

The first of these sets consists of four possible spellings or expansions of the Tetragrammaton (*YHVH*, יהוה).[39] Since each of these "expansions" yields a different numerical value, they are referred to as the expansion of 72, the expansion of 63, the expansion of 45, and the expansion of 52. In order to facilitate discussion and to serve as memory aids, the Kabbalists use the Hebrew equivalents of these numbers when referring to the four expansions. Thus, 72 is עב (*AB*), 63 is סג (*SaG*), 45 is מה (*MaH*), and 52 is בן (*BeN*). When speaking of all four at the same time, they are abbreviated even further and are called עסמב (*ASMaB*).[40]

The Four Expansions of the Tetragrammaton

YOD	יוד	*HY*	הי	*VYV*	ויו	*HY*	הי	72	*AB*	(עב)
YOD	יוד	*HY*	הי	*VAV*	ואו	*HY*	הי	63	*SaG*	(סג)
YOD	יוד	*HA*	הא	*VAV*	ואו	*HA*	הא	45	*MaH*	(מה)
YOD	יוד	*HH*	הה	*VV*	וו	*HH*	הה	52	*BeN*	(בן)

The second set, paralleling the four concepts involved in writing and speaking the Hebrew language, is referred to as *TaNTA*.[41] *TaNTA* (טנתא) is an acrostic for *Ta'amim* (טעמים, cantillations), *Nekudot* (נקדות, vowels), *Tagim* (תגים, crowns), and *Otiot* (אותיות, letters). According to the Ari, the idea of *TaNTA* is an exact parallel to that of *AB-SaG-MaH-BeN (ASMaB)*.[42]

TaNTA and ASMaB

Ta'amim-Cantillation Notes	*AB*	72
Nekudot-Vowel Points	*SaG*	63
Tagim-Crowns	*MaH*	45
Otiot-Letters	*BeN*	52

TaNTA and ASMaB thus represent four general gradations or constrictions of God's light at the highest levels of *Adam Kadmon*. Together with the four letters of the Tetragrammaton they provide the basic paradigm for all further constriction, beginning with the four "senses" of *Adam Kadmon* itself. All these sets thus constitute the hidden spiritual roots for the four revealed *Partzufim* of *Atzilut* (*Chokhmah-Abba*, *Binah-Ima*, *Zer Anpin*, *Malkhut-Nukva*) the four revealed universes (*Atzilut*, *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Asiyah*), the four elements of antiquity (fire, air, water, dust), and the four levels of the physical universe (humans, animals, plants, inert matter).[43]

Before discussing *TaNTA* and *ASMaB*, it would be useful to remember the difference between *Adam Kadmon* and *Atzilut*. We have mentioned that *Atzilut* is the universe of concepts. Corresponding to the *Sefirah* of *Chokhmah*, it is the level of primary thought axioms that underlies all reality.[44] *Adam Kadmon*, on the other hand, is on a level above concepts. It is actually the will that gave rise to the entire process that brought *Atzilut* into existence.

If we break it down logically, we can see that before we are able to think abstract concepts, we need words to describe them. Before we can have words, we need letters. Before we can have letters, we need the motions of the lips, the teeth, the tongue, the palate and the throat. And finally we need the voice with its different inflections.

The idea here is that above *Atzilut* there has to be a level of primeval concepts that precedes even our most subtle thought processes. According to the Kabbalah, these are the letters, the crowns, the vowels and the cantillation notes which enable us not only to read but to understand the words of the Torah. *TaNTA* therefore alludes to the level that precedes conceptualizing a word, thinking it or saying it. It teaches us that the components of a word have to exist at a higher or more abstract level than the word itself.

Similarly, *ASMaB* involves taking the Tetragrammaton and breaking each of its letters into its constituent parts. The letter *Yod* becomes *Yod-Vav-Daleth*. The first *Heh* becomes *Heh-Yod* or *Heh-Aleph* or *Heh-Heh*. *Vav* becomes *Vav-Yod-Vav* or *Vav-Aleph-Vav* or *Vav-Vav*. The last *Heh* is identical to the first *Heh* in each of the four expansions. Thus, whereas the numerical value of the Tetragrammaton itself is 26, when its letters are spelled out according to all the possible variations, the resulting expansions have the numerical values 72, 63, 45 and 52.[45]

AB (72) is the first and highest expansion of the Tetragrammaton. Nevertheless, it is the last of the four expansions to be revealed, after all the other levels below it.[46] It parallels the *Sefirah* of *Chokhmah* and the

Ta'amim (cantillation notes) that are traditionally used in chanting the Torah.[47] It thus represents the idea of uniting and elevating everything that is below it through the concept of song and melody.[48]

In the story of the sixth beggar, Rabbi Nachman indicates that the princess can only be healed through the joy of singing.[49] He refers to the teaching of the *Zohar* that there are ten types of song in the Psalms of David.[50] These ten songs are alluded to in the blowing of the *shofar* on *Rosh HaShanah*. The ten sounds of the *shofar* mark the beginning of the ten days of repentance; it therefore has these ten types of song.[51] Song is the basis of repentance, since song leads to joy and joy brings one from the side of guilt to the side of merit. It is only because the sixth beggar knows all ten types of song that he can revive the princess. This is because the level of *AB-Ta'amim* represents the power to bring back and elevate all those who are far away from God because of their sins.[52]

The second expansion of the Tetragrammaton is *SaG* (63). It is the initial revelation from which the universe of *Nekudim* (points) comes into existence.[53] It parallels the *Sefirah* of *Binah* and the ten types of *Nekudot* (vowel points) of the Hebrew language.[54] It therefore represents the idea of breaking down concepts or words into their constituent parts.

Again, in the story of the sixth beggar, Rabbi Nachman indicates that the ten vowel points parallel ten types of pulse.[55] Since human life depends on a synchronized pulse, it is necessary for the sixth beggar to know all ten pulses in order to heal the princess. This in itself is not enough, however, for each pulse tends to deviate slightly from all the others. He must therefore know how to line up each of these pulses by using the proper melodies. Thus, only when he is able to join *AB-Ta'amim* to *SaG-Nekudot* (*Chokhmah* to *Binah*) can he effect a complete healing.[56]

The third and fourth expansions of the Tetragramaton are *MaH* (45) and *BeN* (52). *BeN* parallels the *Sefirah* of *Malkhut* and the 22 *Otiot* (letters) of the Hebrew language.[57] *MaH* parallels the six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin* and the *Tagim* (crowns) on top of certain letters in the Torah scroll.[58]

Similar to *AB* and *SaG*, *BeN* is revealed prior to *MaH*. Thus, *BeN* represents the spiritual root in *Adam Kadmon* (God's Will) for the shattering of the vessels in *Nekudim*. *MaH* represents the final rectification of the vessels in *Berudim*.[59]

The main purpose of creation was to reveal God's *Malkhut*-Kingship through man. God therefore created the original vessels of *Nekudim* with the built-in inability to receive and transmit His light. As a result of this imperfection, these vessels were broken and, together with sparks of the light that entered them, became the source of the realm of evil.

To the best of our understanding, this entire scenario was programmed

into *Adam Kadmon* for the sake of man. Man was to become a partner in the process of creation by rectifying evil and elevating it to its source in holiness. In this way, he would earn his own perfection and cause a corresponding influx of spiritual sustenance to permeate creation. God's purpose for creation, the revelation of His *Malkhut*, would thus be brought to its completion through man.

In the story of the sixth beggar, the princess is wounded by ten poison arrows as she tries to escape into a Castle of Water surrounded by ten walls of water. According to Rabbi Nachman the arrows denote the power of evil that comes from the breaking of the vessels. They correspond to the level of *BeN*, the universe of *Asiyah* and the element of dust. Since God wanted man to be able to choose freely between good and evil, He placed him in the lowest of the four universes, where the powers of evil have their strongest hold.[60]

The ten walls correspond to the level of *MaH*, the universe of *Yetzirah* and the element of water.[61] Since God wanted man to be able to rectify evil, He gave him the ability to repent. Water cleanses all things; it is therefore seen as the source of purification and rectification.[62]

Ultimately, the sixth beggar represents the ability of the *Tzadik* to bring down the lights of *AB* and *MaH* and rectify the lights of *SaG* and *BeN*. By uniting all the levels of creation he is able to heal the princess and bring her back to life. As Rabbi Nachman ends the story, the sixth beggar therefore says, "I was able to go through all ten walls of water... I was also able to draw all ten types of arrows out of the Princess. I also knew all ten types of pulses and could detect them with my ten fingers... I could then heal her through the ten types of melody. I thus heal her because I have this great power in my hands."

The final healing of the princess thus alludes to the final redemption, regarding which it is said, "On that day, God will be One and His name will be One" (Zekhariah 14:9) and "On that day, God will bind His people's fracture and heal the sores of their wound" (Isaiah 30:26).[63]

In ending this chapter, we could point out that Kabbalah is usually associated with mysticism. Yet, the subjects we have discussed so far do not seem to bear any relation to mysticism. Our discussions have covered some mathematics, some philosophy, some logic and the use of a lot of metaphor, but there seems to be very little of a mystical nature about this. In fact, I know an important rabbinic authority who said, "Mystical? Kabbalah isn't mystical! It is a system of logic!"

He was wrong, however, in that he was emphasizing only one aspect

of the total picture. The truth is that Kabbalah is really the ultimate synthesis of mysticism and logic. On the one hand, what we have called the theoretical branch of Kabbalah is a completely consistent and logical system of correspondences which provides a conceptual framework for dealing with the most profound philosophical questions about life. As mentioned, it is this system that is developed throughout most of the teachings of the Ari. On the other hand, in *Sha'arey Kedushah* (Gates of Holiness), *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh* (Gate of Divine Inspiration) and, to a lesser extent, in *Sha'ar HaKavanot* (Gate of Meditations), explicit instructions are given for how to use the details of this very elaborate system as modes of meditation. We have mentioned that the purpose of Kabbalah was to provide the ladder upon which a person could ascend into the spiritual dimension. This ascent is accompanied at every stage by a full set of instructions. The purpose of these instructions, however, is to experience the reality of God in our lives.

Chapter 13: TZIMTZUM

There is so much misinformation on the *Tzimtzum* that it is important to quote from the *Etz Chaim* itself, which contains one of the clearest statements of this important concept. The word *Tzimtzum* means "constriction," and refers to the process by which God "withdrew" His light in order to create the universe. The Ari describes this process as follows:[1]

> Before all things were created... the Supernal light was simple. It filled all existence. There was no empty space which would be space, emptiness or void. Everything was filled with the simple *Or*-Light of *Ain Sof*. There was no category of beginning and no category of end. All was one simple undifferentiated Infinite light.
>
> When it arose in His simple Will to create all universes, He constricted His infinite light, distancing it to the sides around a center point, leaving a vacated space in the middle of the light of *Ain Sof*... This space was perfectly spherical...
>
> After this constriction took place... there was a place in which all things could be brought into existence (*Atzilut*), created (*Beriyah*), formed (*Yetzirah*), and completed (*Asiyah*). He then drew a simple concentrated ray from the Infinite light into the vacated space... The upper extremity of this ray touched the Infinite light of *Ain Sof* that surrounded the space and extended towards its center. It was through this ray, serving as a conduit, that the light of *Ain Sof* was brought down to spread into the entire vacated space.

In its literal sense, the concept of *Tzimtzum* is straightforward. God first "withdrew" His light, forming a "vacated space" in which all creation would take place. In order for His creative power to be in that space, He drew into it a "ray" of His light. It was through this "ray" that all creation took place.

Virtually all the later Kabbalists warn that the *Tzimtzum* is not to be taken literally, since it is impossible to apply a spatial concept to God.[2] Rather, this is speaking in a conceptual sense. God's simple

light filling all existence alludes to every possible concept of perfection being included within His absolutely simple essence. The *Tzimtzum* and resulting vacated space or negative space mean that God constricted His infinite perfection and created a concept of lack or darkness which would allow a "place" for man's free will and accomplishment. The ray of light that fills the vacated space is the perfection that man is able to draw down into the world as a result of his awakening from below. Because this perfection is earned, the purpose of creation is fulfilled and God's light is revealed in the vacated space without overwhelming it.[3]

Originally, then, there is *Or Ain Sof*, the light of *Ain Sof*. The difference between *Ain Sof* and *Or Ain Sof* could be put in the following manner: we have no perception of *Ain Sof*. It is, by definition, not perceivable. Rather, at that level, everything is included in God's absolute unity. Thus, if a person would want to enter into *Ain Sof*, he would completely cease to exist.[4]

Or Ain Sof, on the other hand, is referred to as light because it represents what can be perceived in *Ain Sof*. It is the highest conceptual category we have to relate to that which is beyond all categories. It is a totally homogeneous and simple light that God brought into existence for the purpose of creating the world.[5] The problem with *Or Ain Sof* is that it partakes of the infinity of *Ain Sof*. Thus, as long as this light fills all existence, nothing else can be created. Although it contains enough energy to produce an infinite number of possible and impossible universes, nothing can be added to it or subtracted from it. This might be related to the mathematical concept of infinity. Just as infinity cannot be broken into parts and every piece of infinity is infinite, so this light, by definition, does not allow for the existence of anything else. This is the meaning of the Ari's statement that "it filled all existence; there was no empty space." To say that a physical object occupies no space is equivalent to saying that it does not exist. Similarly, in the *Or Ain Sof* there was no conceptual space and therefore no possibility of independent existence.[6]

The next step, therefore, was the creation of a concept of "lack" or a "negative light" which would act as a barrier against God's own light. This is the *Chalal HaPanui*, the "Vacated Space." The *Zohar* refers to this concept as *Botzina de Kardenuta*, the "Lamp of Darkness."[7] The constriction that takes place in *Or Ain Sof* thus creates something like a negative energy field. It is a "lamp," but it radiates "darkness," i.e., it blocks out everything that could possibly exist but does not.[8]

Translated into more familiar terms, the *Or Ain Sof* represents the level of *Yod-Chokhmah*, the basic axioms of creation existing in a

completely undifferentiated state. The Vacated Space is the level of *Heh-Binah*, which denotes the power of separation and differentiation. Like *Binah*, the vacated space is the womb of the universe that provides an environment and allows for the existence of finite independent concepts.

The *Kav*-Ray parallels the six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin*. As opposed to *Or Ain Sof* which surrounds the vacated space, and contains an infinite number of possible and impossible universes, the *Kav* is a measured or concentrated ray of light that enters into and permeates the vacated space. While the *Or Ain Sof* is everything that can and cannot exist, the *Kav* is everything that can possibly exist. Corresponding to the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton, it is God's arm extending towards us and limiting existence in order to allow us to receive it.

Finally, the original point at the center of the vacated space corresponds to the last *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton. Like *Malkhut*, it is the focal point or final receptacle for the light of *Ain Sof* entering the vacated space through the *Kav*. Because it is the initial "point" from which God began to "distance His light to the sides," however, the center point also represents the actual beginning of the *Tzimtzum* process. In this sense, therefore, it embodies the idea of "the final deed contained in the first thought."[9]

We have, then, a continuum of four steps: the undifferentiated light, the constriction around a center point, the ray and the center point itself. The center point corresponds to the level of *Asiyah*, *Nefesh* and *Malkhut*. The ray corresponds to *Yetzirah*, *Ruach* and the six *Sefirot* of *Zer Anpin*. The vacated space corresponds to *Beriyah*, *Neshamah* and *Binah*. The light corresponds to *Atzilut*, *Chayah* and *Chokhmah*.

These four levels can be described in terms of *Adam Kadmon*. The center point represents the *Nefesh* of *Adam Kadmon*. The ray represents the *Ruach* of *Adam Kadmon* and is called *Adam Satum*, the Hidden Adam. The vacated space is the *Neshamah* of *Adam Kadmon* and is called *Avir Kadmon*, the First Space. The light is *Chayah* of *Adam Kadmon* and is called the Universe of the *Malbush*-Garment, or, as we saw in the previous chapter, the Universe of *Tzachtzachot*-Splendors. Beyond this is *Yechidah* of *Adam Kadmon*, which is the absolute unity of everything in *Ain Sof*.[10]

From the fact that *Or Ain Sof* is called the Universe of the *Malbush*, it is clear that *Or Ain Sof* is not God, but rather the "garment" that He created to hide Himself. The Psalmist refers to this when he says, "God wrapped Himself with *light* like a garment" (Psalms 104:2). When He then constricted this light, further concealing Himself, He created the Vacated Space. This is alluded to in the verse: "He made *darkness* His hiding place" (Psalms 18:12).[11]

We mentioned that in order for man to be close to God he must emulate Him by overcoming barriers. This would be the source of the greatest possible good because the greater the challenge, the greater the pleasure in overcoming that challenge. The highest spiritual parallel to this idea is the *Tzimtzum*-Constriction that resulted in the Vacated Space. The reason for the *Tzimtzum* stems from a basic paradox. God must be in the world, yet, if He does not restrict Himself from it, all creation would be overwhelmed by His essence. The paradox is that since God removed His light from the vacated space, it must be empty of His essence. Still, God must also fill this space, since "there is no place empty of Him."[12] This is expressed most lucidly by Rabbi Nachman of Breslav:[13]

> This Constriction, which resulted in the Vacated Space, cannot be understood or comprehended at all. [The only time we will be able to grasp its concept is in] the Ultimate Future. This is because we must say two contradictory things [about the Vacated Space], namely, existence and nonexistence.
>
> The Vacated Space came into being as a result of the Constriction, from which (to the extent that we can express it,) God constricted His own Essence. Therefore God's Essence does not exist [in this Space]. If His Essence were there, this Space would not be vacated and there would be nothing besides the Infinite Essence. If this were true, there would also be no place whatsoever for the creation of the universe.
>
> The actual truth, however, is that God's Essence must nevertheless [still] be in this Space. We know for certain that nothing can exist without His Life Force. [Therefore, if God's Essence did not exist in the Vacated Space, nothing else could exist there either.]
>
> Thus, it is impossible to understand the concept of the Vacated Space, except in the Ultimate Future.

The paradox, as elucidated by Rabbi Nachman, is actually very basic. Since God created all things in this Vacated Space, we must say that His creative power exists there. Since God is an absolute Unity, He cannot be separated from His creative power, and therefore, we must also say that He also exists within the Vacated Space. This, however, contradicts the basic principle that this space is vacated and that by definition, God constricted His essence from it.[14]

The main point brought out by this paradox is that this space is

only "dark" and "vacated" with respect to us. The Lamp of Darkness mentioned in the *Zohar* is "darkness" to us, but in relation to God, it too is a "lamp." With respect to God, it is actually light, since for Him, it is as if the *Tzimtzum* never took place.[15] The reason for the *Tzimtzum*-Constriction was so that creation could take place, and this is required for us, not for God. This is expressed by the Psalmist in the verse: "Even darkness is not dark to You. Night shines like the day — light and darkness are the same" (Psalms 139:12).[16]

According to Rabbi Nachman, only a *Tzadik*-Righteous person on the level of Moses could enter the Vacated Space safely. The reason for this is that this is a place where one who does not know how to look will say that God is not there. There is no greater danger than going into a place where God does not appear to be present. Moses, however, was able to enter the Vacated Space, symbolized by Pharaoh's palace, and rectify this by showing that God was there as well. Going into the Vacated Space would mean understanding the paradox as to how God is there even though He is not.[17]

We can ask an obvious question at this point: if the Vacated Space is now filled with God's light, where is God not to be found? In the text of *Etz Chaim* quoted above, the Ari says, "It was through this Ray (*Kav*), serving as a conduit, that the light of *Ain Sof* was brought down to spread into the entire Vacated Space."[18] Technically speaking, this indicates that the Vacated Space is really no longer vacated. True, before the Constriction there was no place empty of God's light, whereas now there is a "place" and God's light fills it. In addition, by virtue of the Constriction, the light was measured and greatly reduced in intensity. Nevertheless, the question remains, where is God not to be found?

In order to understand this, we will briefly review the process of creation as the Ari describes it. Immediately after the *Kav* entered the *Chalal*, light extended away from it in all directions and created a round concentric sphere that filled the entire Vacated Space. This light was then constricted leaving the Vacated Space empty again. Now the *Kav* could extend further towards the center point and another concentric sphere was emanated within the previous one (which again filled the entire Vacated Space). This process of constriction and expansion continued a number of times until the *Kav* reached the center point and the entire Vacated Space was filled with numerous universes one within the other.

Now, according to this, the entire *Chalal* is filled with concentric spheres of God's light. We might conjecture, however, that in between

each of these concentric spheres there is a kind of no-man's-land where God is completely hidden, and where one who does not know how to look would say that God is not there.[19]

This would clarify how every prophet had to experience the godlessness of the *Chalal HaPanui* at his own level of prophecy. As we have seen, the prophetic experience involved moving from one universe to another in order to perceive God's Glory. The prophecy of Moses was on the highest level; therefore, his experience of the Vacated Space was most frightening. The other prophets, including Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, experienced the Vacated Space as well.

This would also explain why any spiritual advancement is so difficult and fraught with pitfalls. Rabbi Nachman describes the experience of standing on the threshold of a new level and feeling completely abandoned and alone.[20] Making it through such an experience is apparently a prerequisite for any kind of serious growth.

Meditatively, as well, we find an excellent example of this in the Talmud. Although occurring at a much lower level of the spiritual dimension than the prophecy of Moses or Ezekiel, the account of the four men who entered *Pardes*, the "Orchard," or "Paradise," is a direct parallel. The Talmud relates the following:[21]

> Four entered the Orchard (*Pardes*). They were Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, the Other, and Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Akiba warned them, "When you enter near the stones of pure marble, do not say 'water, water,' since [there is actually no water there at all, and] it is written, 'He who speaks falsehood will not be established before My eyes'" (Psalms 101:7).
>
> Ben Azzai gazed and died. Regarding him it is written, "Precious in God's eyes is the death of His saints" (Psalms 116:15).
>
> Ben Zoma gazed and was stricken. Regarding him it is written, "You have found honey, eat moderately lest you bloat yourself and vomit it" (Proverbs 25:16).
>
> The Other (Elisha ben Abuya) gazed and cut his plantings (became a heretic).
>
> Rabbi Akiba entered in peace and left in peace ...
>
> The angels also wished to cast down Rabbi Akiba but the Blessed Holy One said, "Leave this elder alone, for he is worthy of making use of My glory."

In this well-known Talmudic account Ben Zoma became insane, Elisha

ben Abuya became a heretic, and Rabbi Akiba entered in peace and left in peace. We see here that these men had to pass through states of consciousness that were radically disorienting and frightening.[22] The obvious lesson is that to go into the *Pardes* in a meditative state you have to be like Rabbi Akiba, who was not only a master in the Kabbalah. He knew all of Torah. Therefore, to successfully go into the *Pardes* experience, one cannot merely be involved in Kabbalah; one really has to know all Torah. Rabbi Akiba is not just known as one of the main transmitters of the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the teacher of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. He is known as the source for everything we have in the Talmud.

Concerning Elisha ben Abuya, the Talmud states that he "cut his plantings." This expression is based on the allegory of the orchard and indicates that Elisha became involved in heresy, which is a form of idolatry. According to Rabbi Hai Gaon (938-1038):[23]

> [Elisha] assumed that there were two Authorities, very much like the [Zoroastrian] Magii who believe in Ormuzd and Ahriman, as well as independent domains of good and evil, like light and darkness... He is therefore likened to one who enters an orchard and cuts down its trees.

The sense of the expression "cut his plantings" can therefore be understood if we look at the totality of the spiritual world as a large tree. A great man like Rabbi Akiba is capable of going up to a certain level of this tree and "grafting" (*harkavah*) himself on to its branches. It is in this sense that the meditative disciplines for ascending into the spiritual realm are called *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, which means literally 'the work of grafting."[24] It was through these disciplines that a person could graft himself on to the Tree of Life.

Heresy, on the other hand, involved taking a branch from this tree and breaking it off in order to worship it as a separate and independent power. It indicated a basic inability to see the inter-connectedness of creation as pointing to a greater unity that exists, so to speak, behind the scenes. Although the account of the *Pardes* takes place at a much lower level than that of Moses' prophetic experience, the parallel is therefore nevertheless an obvious one. As we shall see when we discuss Ezekiel's vision of *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, there is a kind of Vacated Space between the universes of *Asiyah* and *Yetzirah*.[25] In order to enter *Yetzirah* and experience the greater revelation of Godliness that exists there, one has to pass through this terrifying place where God's presence

is totally obscured, i.e. where the paradox of the Vacated Space makes it almost impossible to see how God is there even though He is not. Similarly, Elisha's inability to understand the paradoxes of the spiritual dimension prevented him from moving to a higher level and entering the *Pardes* in peace.

Regarding Ben Azzai's death, the Talmud says: "Precious in God's eyes is the death of His saints." This indicates that his sin was of a totally different nature. He became so engrossed in the spiritual experience that he was unable to return to his body. Rashi thus observes that it is impossible that he should not have died, since it is written, "No man can see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). Nevertheless, his death was a tragedy because he was young and unmarried; he died before his time.[26]

In his *Moreh Nevukhim* (Guide for the Perplexed), Maimonides writes that when great saints knew their time was coming, they would meditate so deeply that they would become one with God. They would essentially let their soul be drawn out of their bodies and die in a state of ecstasy. This was known as *Neshikah*, death by the "Kiss of God."[27] This was the way Moses died. The *Midrash* says that when it was Moses' time to die, God sent the angel of death to him to take his soul. When Moses saw him, however, he merely dismissed him.[28] The *Zohar* indicates that Moses had purified himself so much that his death was on the level of *Yechidah*, called the "desire of desire."[29] In other words, Moses realized that his time to leave this world had arrived, yet he had the privilege of dying the way he chose. He got closer and closer to God until his soul just left his body.

The commentators explain that the closer one gets to God, the more yearning there is.[30] It is like a magnet: the closer it comes, the greater the attraction. This is the meaning of the Talmudic saying that *Tzadikim* have no rest in this world or the next.[31] They are constantly getting closer to *Ain Sof*.

The burning desire of attachment to the Divine can lead to various consequences, as we have seen in the case of the four who entered *Pardes*. A person's soul could attach itself so much to the spiritual that he does not want to come back down to the physical any more. One can find a warning against such a danger in most meditative traditions. It is esssential to maintain one's hold on reality.

A question that presents itself at this point is, how can one strike a balance between this intense desire to cleave to the Divine, on the one hand, and the necessity of not being overwhelmed by it on the other? One could answer this with another question: who reached a higher

level, Ben Azzai, or Rabbi Akiba? Rabbi Akiba did, which means that with the proper balance one achieves control. In this way, the body becomes a partner to the soul. It is no longer seen as an impediment to one's spiritual progress, but rather becomes an aid in reaching the highest levels. This is the idea behind the *Mitzvot*. We do *Mitzvot* with our body, and in this sense, the body becomes a partner. Thus, it cannot be overemphasized how important it is to balance the spiritual and the physical. Ben Azzai allowed his soul to get carried away and he lost control. Ben Zoma lost control of his mind, and was unable to regain his sanity, while Elisha ben Abuya could not understand the paradoxes, and thus became a heretic. Only Rabbi Akiba entered in peace and left in peace.

Part II

MEDITATION and PROPHECY

Meditation and Prophecy

It is widely known that some of the most esoteric teachings of Jewish oral tradition are prohibited unless certain conditions are met. A few of these themes, surrounded by an aura of mystery, are *Arayot* (sexuality), *Ma'aseh Bereshith* ("Work of Creation"), and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* ("Discipline of the Chariot"). According to the *Mishnah* in *Chagigah*, one cannot teach *Arayot* to more than two persons together. One cannot teach *Ma'aseh Bereshith* to more than one person. One can only discuss *Ma'aseh Merkavah* with one person who, in addition, must be wise and understanding.[1]

It is interesting that one cannot talk about *Arayot* with three people present. In other words, if a couple comes to a rabbi with a problem, he can discuss it with the two of them, but if there is a third party present, he is not allowed to talk about it.[2] Teaching *Ma'aseh Bereshith*, the rabbi can only have one person there, and with *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, he cannot even have one person unless he is very talented and wise.

There is an opinion claiming that all three of these are meditative methods.[3] Even the *Arayot* might be included in this. The Kabbalah contains entire meditations that exist between husband and wife,[4] and this might be what the *Mishnah* is referring to.

Rashi's commentary on this *Mishnah* is extremely illuminating. As an example of *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, Rashi cites the *Pirkey Hekhalot* of Rabbi Yishmael. Similarly, as an example of *Ma'aseh Bereshith*, Rashi brings the *Sefer Yetzirah*.[5] According to our understanding of *Sefer Yetzirah*, it seems that *Ma'aseh Bereshith* would be meditation on the *Sefirot* and meditation to form a *Golem*.[6] This does not necessarily mean making a physical *Golem*, but a mental image of a *Golem* or a Persona.[7] It is possible that what some texts call making a *Golem* would be what others refer to as creating a *Partzuf*, a composite image in one's mind, of a departed *Tzadik* or of an angel, and using this as a meditation.

After a person has learned *Ma'aseh Bereshith*, the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* teaches him how to go from level to level in advanced meditation, what Names to recite, and how to engage this persona in a dialogue.[8]

Although the Talmud advises against teaching the *Ma'aseh*

Merkavah publicly, this prohibition refers to the tradition that was given by word of mouth from master to students, from generation to generation. Anything outside of that tradition can only be an introduction to the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and therefore is not included in the prohibition.

In the same way, the Italian community of Lattes allowed the printing of the *Zohar*. They were asked on what basis they authorized the printing of this text, dealing as it does with *Ma'aseh Bereshith* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. The answer was that since it was available as a book, or even as a manuscript, it was permissible to print it. The prohibition only applies to the secret oral tradition.[9]

The Dream Center

Before going into the text of Ezekiel's vision, I would like to give you an idea of what prophecy is and how it works. What happens when a prophet has a vision? What is the mechanism? The prophet meditates;[10] all prophecy comes from meditation.[11] Meditation calms those parts of the mind that deal with the real world in our normal state of consciousness. Hence, our imagination, our reverie, and all the noise in our mind are gently pushed away.[12] Then our consciousness is opened up to the parts of our mind which deal with higher things, the intuitive parts of the mind which are sensitive to spiritual and perhaps to parapsychological phenomena. This is why parapsychological phenomena are enhanced through meditation. According to the Ramban (Nachmanides), through meditation people may actually have perceptions of the future or see things that are very far away.[13] Yet the human mind is also capable of experiencing and perceiving the spiritual, and it is this power that is specially enhanced through meditation.[14]

At the simplest level of prophecy, therefore, a person achieves a feeling of closeness to God. It is almost indescribable but, most importantly, it is a feeling of the Divine. The next stage, which is the actual preparation for prophecy, is to bring that feeling into contact with the part of one's mind that produces images, the imagination, or what I call the dream center in the mind.[15]

Let us take this step by step. *Sefirot* and angels are formless and totally abstract.[16] When a person experiences such aspects of spirituality, anything he feels seems the same. A person does not have any sensitivity at this stage.[17] He is like a man who has been blind from birth, has an operation and can suddenly see. What does he see? He has not learned to distinguish images or colors. For someone like this the experience is one of total confusion. Yet, after becoming accustomed to seeing the world for the first time, he starts feeling different nuances.

Let me give you a different example. Let us take wine tasting. If I give my six year old son three or four different vintages to drink, it would be just wine for him. He would not perceive the experience of wine tasting. The average adult drinking wine would probably be able to differentiate sweet, sour, tart, etc. Professional wine tasters, however, could taste the difference between wine from the north slope and wine from the south slope, because the more a person becomes accustomed to something, the more sensitive he becomes to differences.

One can also think of snow. We have one word from snow, whereas the Eskimos have about twenty, describing wet snow, dry snow, good packing, poor packing, etc. Their entire life is snow. Hence, for them, every gradation of snow is a totally different reality.

The same is true of the spiritual experience. At first, when a person meditates, he has a spiritual experience and he does not distinguish between one experience and another. All spiritual experiences feel the same. Very often people meditate and pray with *Kavanah* (directed consciousness), and the only thing they can say about it is that they had a spiritual experience. The ability to distinguish between such experiences is so rare that it is questionable. This is certainly the case in the English language in which there is not even a vocabulary to describe different spiritual experiences.

Hence, a person who has had a lot of spiritual experiences realizes that there are gradations and many nuances.[18] There is an experience of being close to various different levels of angels,[19] or to the souls of righteous people from previous generations like Elijah.[20] Each experience feels slightly different. Gradually, at the level of a prophet, one becomes very well trained. He can tell the difference between one angel and another, and each experience is different.

After achieving the first level of meditation, the feeling of closeness to God, and focusing this feeling into various spiritual experiences, the next thing a person has to learn is how to connect these experiences with his dream center.

What happens when a person dreams? Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal, 1707-1746) describes sleep in the following manner:[21]

> When man sleeps, his faculties rest, his senses are quiet, and his mind is relaxed and hushed. The only thing that continues to function is his imagination (dream center), and this conceives and envisions various images. Some of these images arise from the individual's experiences while awake.[22] Others may be the result of substances that rise to the brain, either from the body's own hormones, or

from the food that one eats. These images are the dreams that all people experience.

God has also decreed that the bond between the body and the divine soul should be somewhat loosened while man sleeps. The portions of the soul from *Ruach* (Spirit) and above then rise and sever themselves from the body. Only one portion, the *Nefesh* (Soul), remains with the lower [animal] soul.[23]

The freed portions of the soul can then move about in the spiritual realm wherever they are allowed. They can interact and associate with such spiritual beings as the angels who oversee natural phenomena, the angels associated with prophecy, and *Shedim* (demons). Whatever they experience will depend on a variety of factors.

When these higher levels of the soul perceive something, they can sometimes transmit it, step by step, until it reaches the animal soul. The imagination is then stimulated and forms images in its normal manner. [A person can then see this as a dream.]...

Dreams in general can therefore arise either from the imagination itself or as a result of the stimulation of the Soul (*Neshamah*) according to what it perceives. In the latter case, the initiating agent is always one of the spiritual Forces which make something known to the Soul (*Neshamah*). The Soul then transmits this to the imagination.

If that spiritual Force is one of God's holy servants, then the information that the soul receives will be true. If it comes from the opposing Forces, on the other hand, then it will be false. Our sages thus teach us that a true dream originates through an angel, while a false one originates through a *Shed* (demon).[24]

The person is asleep, his conscious mind at rest, and a thought comes up from his subconscious into the dream center. When this very abstract idea from the subconscious reaches the dream center, the latter can translate it into symbols. Therefore, the subconscious thought or the problem that one is troubled with is often expressed in an extremely vivid dream. This is what happens when a person experiences a particularly close feeling to God. Spiritual concepts come to him which are essentially unintelligible to the human mind, and the dream center translates them into symbols.

This is a very dangerous thing to do, because if a person's mind is not perfectly pure, the spiritual experience is going to be translated into whatever inane thought is in his mind, and this is why the various disciplines for prophecy required such great purification of thought.[25] As indicated in *Meditation and the Bible*,[26] a person has to go through the ten stages of purification mentioned in Ramchal's *Path of the Just*,[27] before becoming worthy of *Ruach HaKodesh* (Divine Inspiration), or Prophecy.[28]

A prophet must reach a level where he can discern between every possible shade and nuance of spiritual experience. This is only possible if he has purified his dream center by disengaging it from his subconscious mind. Only then can he be sure that the spiritual experience is pure and without any admixture.

It is very likely that some of the prophetic disciplines were created specifically for this purpose, namely, for detaching or unwiring your subconscious, and wiring your spiritual centers to your dream center.[29] If the prophet does that correctly, every different nuance is going to have a different imagery. Sometimes he will see an angel with four wings, another time he will see an angel with six wings, and yet another time he will recognize Michael or Gabriel. He will see a complete picture of an angel, although, of course, this image is not what an angel looks like, because an angel has absolutely no form. The image is being created totally by his mind.[30]

This is what we referred to above as part of the discipline of *Ma'aseh Bereshith*. The question now is, how does this actually happen? How is the image of an angel created in the mind of a prophet and where does it come from? In speaking of the *Sefirot* and *Partzufim* we saw that man being created in the image of God refers to the spiritual dimension.[31] It would seem from this that the human mind is modeled on this spiritual blueprint or archetype. If we choose an example of an angel, being that, as mentioned, it has absolutely no form, the image of the angel that the prophet will find in his dream center is the one that he is familiar with. If the prophet is deeply immersed in Torah, he will be able to translate this experience into the language and imagery of the Torah. Hence, he may visualize an angel with six wings, according to the ones in Isaiah's vision,[32] or one with four wings, according to Ezekiel's vision,[33] which are on a different level.[34]

Ancient sources agree that every prophet expresses his prophecy in a way that reflects his own unique style of speech or writing.[35] In the majority of cases, translating the spiritual experience is done, to some degree, by the prophet himself, according to what he is familiar with.

A prophet living in Shakespeare's time would speak in Shakespearian English, whereas one living today would speak in modern English. A prophet speaks in the language of his milieu because the vocabulary he uses is a result of the actual spiritual experience being translated through his mind.

The prophet, therefore, has to be so totally involved in Torah that his means of expression parallels those of the Torah. The amazing thing about the Bible is that despite the fact that each prophet expresses himself in almost every conceivable image and metaphor available, the basic unity of the spiritual experience comes through with extreme clarity and precision. The question remains, however, is the prophetic vision to be taken metaphorically, like Jeremiah's vision of the boiling cauldron,[36] or is it in a sense to be taken literally? Essentially, one gets the impression that there is something unequivocally objective about prophecy. Although each prophet's visions depend on his own dream center, they all reveal different aspects of something greater. This might support the contention that man's being created in the image of God means that the spiritual blueprint of the universe is hardwired into the human mind. The prophet's ability to perceive certain spiritual things is thus the result of the human mind being modeled on this blueprint.

In the case of every prophet something of his own mind, his own ego, enters the prophecy. This is a very important point. The prophecy is being reflected through his mind. You are not actually seeing the spiritual impact itself. All you are really seeing is what his mind interprets. This is the Non-shining *Ispaklaria* the Talmud refers to as the medium through which all the prophets received their visions.[37] Moses, on the other hand, saw through a Shining *Ispaklaria*. The Ramchal states that a Shining *Ispaklaria* is a lens, while a Non-shining *Ispaklaria* is a mirror.[38] In other words, Moses saw through a clear glass while all the other prophets saw a reflection in a mirror.[39] Essentially, every other prophet saw himself; he saw his own mind. In the case of Moses and the Torah, Moses' own image-producing center was not involved, the reason being that Moses' prophecy consisted completely of words, not of imagery. His spiritual experience was the words themselves. Instead of having a vague feeling and then translating it into imagery, Moses was on such a high level that the feelings were no longer vague. They were actually articulated as words. This is what the Torah means when it says, "I speak to [Moses] mouth to mouth, manifestly and not in allegory (Numbers 12:8).[40]

Rashi points out that in the case of all prophets, the text reads: *Ko Amar HaShem*, "Thus says God." In the case of Moses, however, the Torah says, *Zeh Devar HaShem*, "This is the word of God."[41] Thus, we

have a direct quotation from Moses and an indirect quotation in the case of all the other prophets.

We can now understand that when every other prophet has an experience of God, his dream center is going to produce an image. If the dream center relates to God as a person, the image he sees will be that of a person.[42] In addition, the face on the image will be his own, since it is being interpreted by his own ego, his own mind.[43]

In the case of Moses, on the other hand, the prophecy bypassed his dream center. The only exception is when he first heard God's voice. At that point, we are told, it sounded like that of his father.[44] The reason for this is that Moses was still a novice and his prophecy was therefore on a much lower level.

This distinction between clear and unclear vision also explains a number of other things. For instance, the Torah reads: "The people saw God and ate and drank" (Exodus 24:11). Similarly, Isaiah says, "I saw God sitting on a high exalted throne" (Isaiah 6:1). Yet, when Moses wanted to see God, He was told that "No man can see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). The Talmud questions the meaning of these statements.[45] If the people saw God, and ate and drank, how come Moses, the greatest of all, asked to see God and was not allowed to? The Talmud answers that the other prophets only saw their own vision of God. Moses, on the other hand, saw his visions with complete clarity because his ego was not involved. This is the meaning of the Shining *Ispaklaria*. These visions did not go through his dream center; rather, the optical centers in his brain were rewired to see the spiritual dimension.

In addition, just before his death, Moses reached the highest level of prophecy when God actually spoke through him. This is the essential difference between *Devarim* (Deuteronomy), the fifth book of the Torah, and the other four. In the others, the Divine became attached to Moses' hearing center. Hence, Moses heard God's voice and would speak that which he heard. In the case of *Devarim*, the *Zohar* notes that the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) spoke out of Moses' mouth.[46] Thus, in *Devarim*, Moses reached an even higher state of consciousness where his speech center was attached to the Divine. This is alluded to in a number of places in *Devarim* where Moses is talking about God in the third person. At one point he suddenly slips into the first person and then returns to the third.[47] If you read the Torah in the original and pay attention to these subtle changes, it becomes clear that Moses reached the highest level of prophecy when God actually spoke through him.

A phenomenon which is common to all prophetic experience is that

prophets invariably speak of themselves as if they were referring to other individuals. Moses himself said, "And God spoke to Moses."[48] Jacob said, "Gather around and listen, O sons of Jacob!"[49] Balaam likewise said, "Thus says Balaam, the son of Beor."[50] Deborah sang, "Awake, awake Deborah!"[51] Ezekiel as well says "And the word of God came to Ezekiel" (1:3). There are many similar cases. The cause of this phenomenon is their deep meditation, *Hitbodedut*,[52] where the mind elevates itself above the body and the body remains as if it were devoid of soul.[53] It therefore appears to these individuals that they themselves are another person. Occasionally we find that when poets composed their songs, they would attain a state of ecstasy and lose all bodily sensation due to their deep meditation.[54]

We can see, then, that prophets use the third person because they are on a level of objectivity, of total detachment from themselves. It could be that this is the concept of *Hishtavut* (הִשְׁתַּוּוּת) mentioned in a number of texts.[55] This term is derived from the root *Shava* (שׁוה), meaning "equal." It denotes a certain kind of equanimity. Therefore, I usually translate *Hishtavut* as "stoicism," where a person becomes totally objective about himself.[56]

In his *Me'irat Eynayim* (Light of the Eyes), Rabbi Isaac of Acco records the following account:[57]

> A sage once came to one of the Meditators (*Mitbodedim*) and asked that he be accepted into their society.
>
> The other replied, "My son, blessed are you to God. Your intentions are good. But tell me, have you attained stoicism or not?"
>
> The sage said, "Master, explain your words."
>
> The Meditator said, "If one man is praising you and another is insulting you, are the two equal in your eyes or not?"
>
> He replied, "No my master. I have pleasure from those who praise me and pain from those who degrade me. But I do not take revenge or bear a grudge."
>
> The other said, "Go in peace, my son. You have not attained stoicism. You have not reached a level where your soul does not feel the praise of one who honors you, nor the degradation of one who insults you. You are not prepared for your thoughts to be bound on high, that you should come and meditate (*hitboded*). Go and increase the humbleness of your heart, and learn to treat everything equally until you have become stoic. Only then you will be able to meditate."

As Rabbi Isaac explains, there is a series of steps that one must climb in order to reach the highest levels. The first step is *Devekut*, the ability to direct and attach one's thoughts to God. This prepares the person for the next step, *Hishtavut*, the ability to totally nullify one's ego and to feel exactly the same whether he is praised or insulted. Then follows *Hitbodedut*, the ability to completely isolate oneself internally. All of these steps are a preparation for receiving prophecy itself.[58] They indicate that a person is utterly detached from his "I." He can then look down at himself from outside of himself and refer to himself in the third person. He can call himself by his own name because he is temporarily not the person he usually is.

This is an extremely important point. We know that a prophetic vision can only be obtained when one is in a perfectly balanced mental state.[59] A person should be completely alert and in a pleasant, joyous, mood.[60] Depression, lethargy,[61] and anger[62] prevent one from being able to receive the prophetic influx; joy in serving God is conducive to it.[63]

The ability to keep one's balance is therefore essential, because the prophetic experience itself can be a frightening and terrifying one. When it actually begins the prophet is completely overwhelmed. His physical being and his senses cease to operate.[64] Nevertheless, he realizes that he is having a true spiritual experience and that he is totally bound to God. He perceives everything with total clarity and every nuance of what he sees and hears is indeliby engraved in his consciousness. Finally, in the case of most prophets, it is the dream center that gives him the corresponding images in the physical world with which to describe his experience. When he then returns to a normal state of consciousness, he is able to relate his message.[65]

After this brief description of how prophecy works, we will begin our analysis of Ezekiel's vision. One of the questions the *Zohar* poses is why Ezekiel revealed the entirety of his vision. He may have been privileged to see the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* as many before him had, but where did he get permission to make these things public in a way that had never been done before?[66]

We find in the Talmud, "Everything that Ezekiel saw, Isaiah saw as well."[67] Moreover, we know that the Israelites visualized the entire *Merkavah* at the Red Sea and Mount Sinai.[68] They were shown the same system through which God brought the universe into existence and continues to interact with creation. Still, Ezekiel was the only one to describe it explicitly. According to the *Zohar*, however, it was absolutely

necessary that Ezekiel be shown every detail of the *Merkavah* and communicate it to his contemporaries. Why? Because otherwise it would have been irretrievably lost.

It is for this reason that the first chapter of Ezekiel is called *Ma'asch Merkavah*, meaning the "Discipline of the Chariot." The details that Ezekiel wrote are not just descriptive. Besides alluding to the complete system through which God runs the universe, it contains the meditative techniques for setting up a *Merkavah*,[69] i.e., for attaining this spiritual experience. According to the Kabbalists, hidden in this first chapter lies the entire methodology through which all the prophets attained prophecy. It contains the key to all the secrets of prophecy and to almost all of Kabbalah as well. Therefore, it is important at this point to quote the vision in its entirety.

Ezekiel's Vision

1:1. And it was in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, while I was among the exiles on the river *Khebar*, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. 2. On the fifth day of the month (it was the fifth year of the exile of King Yehoiachin), 3. God's word had come to Ezekiel ben Buzi, the priest, in the land of the Chaldeans on the river *Khebar*, and God's hand was upon him.

4. I saw, and behold a stormy wind came from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a Glow (*Nogah*) round about, and from its midst was the likes of the Speaking Silence (*Chashmal*), in the midst of the fire.

5. From its midst was the form of four *Chayah*-angels (Living Creatures) — this was their appearance — they had a human form. 6. Each one had four faces and every one had four wings. 7. Their feet were straight, and the soles of their feet were round like those of a calf's foot, and they shined like a vision of polished copper.

8. Human hands were under their wings on all four sides, and all four had faces and wings. 9. Their wings were joined to each other, and they did not turn when they went. Each one moved in the direction of their faces as they went.

10. The form of their faces were, the face of a man, with the face of a lion to the right of the four, the face of an ox to the left of the four, and the face of an eagle to the four. 11. Their faces and wings were separated on top. For each one, two connected the individuals, and two covered

their bodies. 12. Each individual moved in the direction of his face. They went to where the *Ruach*-spirit was to go. They did not turn as they went.

13. The form of the *Chayah*-angels had the appearance of burning coals of fire. Walking between the *Chayah*-angels was a vision of torches, and a Glow (*Nogah*) for fire, and from the fire went forth sparks.

14. The *Chayah*-angels ran and returned, like a vision of lightning.

15. Then I gazed at the *Chayah*-angels, and behold, there was a single *Ophan*-angel (Wheel) on the earth near the *Chayah*-angels. One was on each of its four faces.

16. The appearance of the *Ophan*-angels and their actions was like a vision of topaz. All four had a single form, and their appearance and actions were as if there was an *Ophan*-Angel within an *Ophan*-angel.

17. They moved on their four sides as they went; they did not turn as they went. 18. They had high backs and were filled with fear. The backs of all four were filled with eyes.

19. When the *Chayah*-angels moved, the *Ophan*-angels went near them. When the *Chayah*-angels rose up from the earth, the *Ophan*-angels were also lifted. 20. Wherever the *Ruach*-spirit (of the *Chayah*-angels) had to go, the *Ophan*-angels were taken. They were lifted up beside them because the *Ruach*-spirit of the *Chayah*-angel was in the *Ophan*-angels. 21. When one went, so went the other; when one stood, so stood the other. When they were lifted from the earth, the *Ophan*-angels were lifted beside them, for the *Ruach*-spirit of the *Chayah*-angels was in the *Ophan*-angels.

22. The form above the heads of the *Chayah*-angels was that of a firmament, looking like a fearsome ice, spread out above their heads.

23. Under the firmament, their wings were straight out, one toward another. For each individual, two covered them, and for each individual, two covered their bodies.

24. Then I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty when they went. The sound of their tumult was like the sound of an armed camp; when they stood still they let down their wings. 25. There was a sound from the firmament which was above

their heads; when they stood still, they let down their wings.

26. Above the firmament that was over their heads, like a vision of a sapphire, was the form of a throne, and over the form of the Throne, there was a form like a vision of a Man on it from above.

27. I saw a vision of the Speaking Silence (*Chashmal*) like a vision of fire, as a house for it round about, from the vision of His thighs and above. From the vision of His thighs and below, I saw a vision like fire, with a Glow (*Nogah*) around it. 28. Like a vision of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the vision of the Glow around. This was the vision of the form of God's glory. I saw it, and I fell on my face. Then I heard a voice speak.

2:1. It said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet, and I will speak to you." 2. Then a *Ruach*-spirit came in me, and it spoke to me. It stood me on my feet, and I heard that which spoke to me.

Ezekiel's text starts with the words *Va'Yehi* ("And it was"). This expression usually indicates a time of trouble.[70] In this case, the trouble refers primarily to the *Galut* (exile). Prophecy was coming to an end at that time. Ezekiel was one of the last of the prophets. He was in exile in the land of the Chaldeans, in Babylon.[71] Once the Temple would be destroyed and the remainder of the Jews exiled from the Land of Israel, there would be no more prophecy.

The reason for this is that prophecy itself requires a number of conditions. First of all, prophecy can usually take place only in the Land of Israel and not in any other land.[72] The Land of Israel, however, is not conducive to prophecy at all times. Before prophecy can exist in the Land of Israel, it must be settled and inhabited by the majority of Jews in the world.[73]

This is actually evident in the Torah's words concerning prophecy. The Torah states, "The Lord your God will raise up a prophet in your midst" (Deuteronomy 18:15). We learn from this that prophecy can only exist in the Holy Land. The Land of Israel, however, is only called "your midst" when it is populated by all, or at least the majority, of the Jewish people.[74] It is through the concentrated spiritual energy of the entire Jewish people that prophecy exists, and such concentration is only effective in the Land of Israel.[75]

After the first diaspora, the situation never existed again where the majority of Jews lived in Israel.[76] In spite of the fact, however, that

prophecy was going to come to an end due to exile, the whole mystery of prophecy was not to be lost. There would come a time when it would be needed once again. The Rambam (Maimonides) thus writes in his *Iggeret Teiman* that one of the conditions of the pre-messianic era will be the restoration of prophecy.[77] In fact, the Rambam holds that Elijah the prophet will have to come before the Messiah's arrival,[78] and this means that prophecy will be reinstated.[79]

"I was among the exiles ..." (Ezekiel 1:1).

The *Zohar* comments that Ezekiel's *Ani*-I, or the *Midah*-Characteristic that represents his "I," was in exile.[80] As we have seen, the idea of *Ani* usually refers to the *Sefirah* of *Malkhut*, also known as *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence dwelling in each person.[81] When Ezekiel says that his "I" is in exile, this is an exact parallel to the exile of the *Shekhinah*.[82]

Meditatively, the *Ani* is the core of our being and our true self. In fact, what are we trying to do when we meditate? One of the most important goals of *Hitbodedut*-Meditation is to become one with our essence, to feel the Divine within us. In order to do this we must learn to gently push away all the extraneous mental images and thoughts that fill our minds. As we said, this is essentially a process of disengaging our inner self from its outer trappings. When we then penetrate to the essence of our being, we expect to find the true self.

Yet, is this always true? Does one always find the *Ani* after stripping everything away? There could be emptiness. If a person has always defined himself totally in terms of others, then he is not at all his own person. His "I" could be in exile. His meditation would therefore entail reclaiming his "I" by directing his consciousness to its Divine source. In Kabbalistic terms, this is known as redeeming the *Shekhinah* from exile.[83]

"I was ... on the river *Khebar*..." (1:1).

A question is raised in the first *Mekhilta* of *Parashat Bo*: how could Ezekiel receive a prophetic vision when it is known that this is only possible in the Land of Israel?[84] One of the answers offered is that anybody who has already experienced prophecy in the Holy Land could have prophecy elsewhere.[85] Another answer is that the prophet

may be alone in a pure place, as in the case of Ezekiel who was in a river, a body of pure water, similar to a *Mikvah*.[86] Thus, the fact that the text reads "on the river *Khebar*" and not "near the river," may mean that he was actually in the river, where it was pure enough for him to achieve prophecy.[87]

The word *Khebar* means "already was."[88] The *Zohar* claims in a number of places that this "river-that-already-was" is the river from Eden.[89] This river has a number of important connotations. As I wrote in *Waters of Eden*,[90] the river of Eden is first of all seen as the spiritual source of all the waters in the world. The Talmud claims that if one makes a vow that he won't enjoy the river from Eden, he is not allowed to enjoy any waters in the world, because that is the source of all water.[91] It seems that it is also the source of all purification.[92]

One of the reasons why the waters of a spring or river can purify is because they exist in a completely natural state. As long as they remain connected to this natural state, not being drawn through anything that can become unclean, they have the power to purify anybody who enters them. The same is true of a *Mikvah*. The main reason why the waters of a *Mikvah* can purify is because they may not be channeled there by any means that involves human intervention. In this way they are still linked to their natural state and hence to their source in the Garden of Eden. We learn from this that, in order to purify ourselves, we must first reestablish our link with the Garden of Eden. In the case of Ezekiel, this was accomplished by immersing himself in the river *Khebar*.

The *Zohar* brings additional information on the link between Eden and the river *Khebar*.[93] It states that the first *Heh* in the Tetragrammaton, corresponding to the *Sefirah* of *Binah*, is Eden. The river that flows from Eden is the *Vav* of the Tetragrammaton, corresponding to *Zer Anpin*. As we have mentioned, when you give charity, you make a *Yichud*-Unification of the Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*. The *Yod* represents the coin. *Heh* is the hand that gives it. *Vav* is the arm reaching out to the poor man, and the final *Heh* is the hand of the poor man who takes it. This is God's charity as well. *Yod* is the ten sayings with which the world was created. *Heh* is the hand with which God gives to us. *Vav* is the gesture with which He stretches out and gives. The final *Heh* is the ability He gives us to take what He wants to give to us.[94]

Vav, meaning "and," is the connection in this as well as in many other ways. The numerical value of *Vav* is six, alluding to the six directions of space which connect all things. Eden would be the *Heh*, the hand that

gives. The river that comes from Eden is the *Vav*, God reaching out to us. Incidentally, note that immediately after the Torah mentions the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the middle of the garden, it refers to the river that came out of Eden.[95] Once the Tree of Knowledge exists, the possibility of banishment and exile comes into being. It is necessary, therefore, that God create a link through which we can reestablish our connection with Him, namely, the river that emerges from Eden. It is for this reason that the river is mentioned at this point.[96]

The word *Khebar* is spelled *Khaf*, *Beth*, *Resh* (כְּבָר). We have mentioned the fact that *Cherub* (כְּרוּב), *Rakhav* (רכב) and *Merkavah* (מרכבה) are all permutations of the same three letters.[97] It is therefore highly significant that Ezekiel's vision took place on the river *Khebar*. In addition, the word *Barukh*-Blessed (ברוך) also shares the same root letters. It is not by chance, therefore, that at the climax of Ezekiel's vision, the prophet describes himself being lifted up and hearing the rushing sound of the *Chayot* exclaiming, "Blessed (ברוך) be God's glory from His place" (Ezekiel 3:12).[98]

"And I saw visions (*Mar'ot*) of *Elohim*" (1:1).

The *Zohar* notes in a number of places that *Mar'ot* (מַרְאוֹת, visions) is written without a letter *Vav*. This *Vav*, representing *Zer Anpin* or *Yetzirah*, was missing because this level of prophecy was about to be closed off completely.[99] Although we mentioned that Ezekiel's vision of *Atzilut* was refracted into *Yetzirah* and therefore greatly diminished, even this was coming to an end. After Ezekiel, nobody was going to see the Divine Chariot in its full glory for a long time.

"God's (*YHVH*) word had come to Ezekiel ben Buzi... and God's (*YHVH*) hand was upon him" (1:3).

We have mentioned that Ezekiel refers to himself as "I" in verse 1, whereas in verse 3, he speaks about himself in the third person. In one case he is speaking from within himself, and in the other he is communicating from without himself. The most important difference between these two verses, however, is that the first verse uses the Divine Name *Elohim*, while the third verse uses the Name *YHVH*.[100]

The main factor that distinguishes between these two Names is that *YHVH* represents *Midat HaRachamim*, God's Attribute of Mercy, and

Elohim represents *Midat HaDin*, the Divine Attribute of Justice.[101] We are left to wonder, however, in terms of the prophetic experience, what is the difference between God's revealing Himself with the Name *Elohim* as opposed to the Name *YHVH*?

The Divine Name *Elohim* (אלהים), which is used exclusively throughout the first chapter of Genesis, refers to the manifestation of delineation and definition. This Name is also numerically equivalent to the word *HaTeva* (הטבע), meaning "Nature."[102] This indicates that God created the world with the Name *Elohim* so that it would operate according to certain well-defined natural laws. Actually, these laws serve the purpose of concealing God's immanence in the world. As long as they are in effect, God binds Himself, as it were, to interact with the world on its terms and not on His.[103]

The Tetragrammaton, on the other hand, points to God's transcendance and the impossibility of His being constrained or confined by the laws of time, space and nature. This Name has the *Yod* and the *Heh*, representing the past and the future, and the *Vav*, representing the temporal present with its six days and six directions of space. Hence, it contains *Hayah* (He was), *Hoveh* (He is) and *Yihyeh* (He will be), and alludes to God's being in the past, present and future simultaneously.[104]

This distinction is further clarified in the Torah's two accounts of the creation of man. In the first account, the Torah says, "God (*Elohim*) created man with His image; in the image of *Elohim*, He created him, male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). This means that a number of significant aspects of man's existence, namely his logic, his mental processes, and his physical nature, derive from the Name *Elohim*.

In the second account, the Torah says,"*YHVH Elohim* formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils a soul-breath (*neshamah*) of life; man thus became a living creature" (Genesis 2:7). Here the Torah is discussing man's soul. This aspect of man's existence derives from the Name *YHVH*, which is beyond *Elohim*.

In general, man is seen as a microcosm, comprising within himself all the various different forces that God used to create the universe. Thus, for example, man's two arms, two legs, torso and sexual organ parallel the six days of creation and the six *Sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod*. His ability to think logically parallels the logic with which the world was made and the *Sefirah* of *Binah*.[105] It is with our logic that we grasp for definition and try to make sense of the world we live in. The world was created in such a way that events follow a logical sequence of cause and effect. Hence, we are able to understand ourselves and the world

with the same built-in logic that God used to create everything. This, however, is only the level of *Elohim*.

Elohim is essentially the revelation that can be grasped by human logic. *YHVH*, on the other hand, is a revelation transcending human logic. *YHVH* is above time. Instead of operating in a temporal sequence, which is the way our minds work, on the level of *YHVH* God operates in a non-temporal sequence. *YHVH* also alludes to the hidden *Sefirah* of *Keter*, the level of God's Will that completely transcends the logic of the universe.

When the Torah describes the creation of man's body, it uses the Name *Elohim*, because, ultimately, man can use his intellect and his logic to understand his body and the physical world of which it is a part. When the Torah wishes to describe man's soul, however, the Name *YHVH* is used. This is because man cannot understand his soul. It is on a level that completely transcends logic.

We can now try to understand this distinction in terms of our text. When Ezekiel uses the Name *Elohim*, he refers to himself as *Ani*, I. This points to the fact that he is still tied to his body and limited to the level of human logic. When he uses the Name *YHVH*, he speaks of himself in the third person because he is now outside of his own logic.

"I saw, and behold a stormy wind came from the north, a great cloud and flashing fire, and a Glow (*Nogah*) round about and from its midst was the likes of the Speaking Silence (*Chashmal*), in the midst of the fire" (1:4).

Essentially, Ezekiel saw five things: a storm wind; a great cloud; a fire; a Glow; and the *Chashmal*. According to the *Zohar*, the first four were *Klipot*, husks or barriers that Ezekiel had to experience before getting into the vision.[106] There are four *Klipot*. The fourth *Klipah*, which can be either good or evil, is the *Klipat Nogah*, the "glow round about."

First let us examine how many "elements" the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* deals with. The four elements of antiquity are *Ruach* (air), *Mayim* (water), *Esh* (fire) and *Afar* (dust).[107] It is interesting that the *Sefer Yetzirah* discusses the three mother letters *EMeSH*: *Aleph*, *Mem* and *Shin* (אמש). *Aleph* is air, *Mem* is water and *Shin* is fire.[108] There are only three elements present in the *Sefer Yetzirah*. Dust is not mentioned.

The same is true of Ezekiel's vision: "a stormy wind from the north" would represent the element of air, "a great cloud" would be water, and

"a flashing fire" would be the element of fire. Again, dust or earth is not mentioned. The reason for this is that water, fire and air relate to giving. Dust represents our ability to receive.[109] This is confirmed when we look at the correspondences with the letters of the Tetragrammaton. Water is *Yod*, fire is *Heh*, air is *Vav*, and dust is the final *Heh*.[110] In terms of the *Sefirot* also, water and fire are *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, air is *Zer Anpin*, and dust is *Malkhut*.

In terms of food, for example, there is sunlight, which is fire or energy, then water and air. All of these converge into the dust of the earth, which receives its nutrients from them, transforms them into itself and brings forth its fruits. This is essentially what we have in mind when we say the blessing for bread: *HaMotzi Lechem Min HaAretz*. Although wheat is produced from the combined action of all the elements, they only come together in the earth. We thus thank God for "bringing forth bread from the earth."

It is very possible that man himself is equivalent to the fourth element, dust. Dust can either transform sun, rain and wind into food, or it can lie fallow. The same is true of man. Man is "alive" when he is capable of receiving and integrating many disparate elements into himself and giving forth something completely new. On the other hand, man is "dead" when the element of dust completely dominates his personality and he is incapable of overcoming his inner inertia.[111]

We can see this in a slightly different way. Man's body was originally a combination of dust and water.[112] Dust alone is the symbol of inertia, while water is change and renewal. When dust is mixed with water it becomes fertile and productive. The same is true of man. As long as a person lives, he receives and gives. In fact, his giving allows him to receive more, and, in turn, to give more. When he dies, however, he is no longer able to give. As a result, even his receiving stops. This is the meaning of the Torah's statement concerning man's death: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Death is the ultimate state of receiving without being able to give back. It is therefore represented by a complete regression to the level of dust.

It is interesting to note that this verse also alludes to the resurrection of the body. The *Midrash* states that all bodies remain in the earth until all that is left of them is a "scoop of dust" (*Tarvad shel Rakav*). This final decay product of the body becomes mixed with the dust of the earth and, when the time of the resurrection comes, will germinate and grow into a new body.[113] Thus, although the element of dust represents a completely passive state, it alludes to the possibility of renewed life. This may be the reason why it is forbidden to cremate a person according

to Jewish law.[114] When we die, we must return to the element of dust, not to the element of fire. Fire would imply that a person is able to give when he is dead. Alternatively, ashes, the final product of fire, represents the complete destruction of the elements whereas dust represents a state of sleep or total passivity that is capable of bringing forth new life.[115]

Practically speaking, the three *Klipot* of Ezekiel's vision, air, water and fire, represent the barriers of the physical world that prevent us from perceiving the spiritual dimension. Everything in the physical world is a form of external stimulus that wants to give us something. Air, fire and water, are all *givers*. Someone seeking prophecy, however, does not want anything physical affecting him. On the contrary, he wants to detach himself totally from all physical things — in this case, air, water and fire. Therefore, from the point of view of meditation, all physical things are considered *Klipot*. Their effect must be totally nullified.

Many Kabbalistic texts discuss this point,[116] and we also find it explicitly mentioned in the writings of Rabbi Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1508), who also claims that these *Klipot* are experiential.[117] How does a prophet go about getting prophecy? He must clear his mind by meditating. According to the Rambam, one of the ways to do this was to play music.[118] Listening to music could be a type of meditation, especially if it is played a certain way. For instance, if one took three or four notes and played them over and over again, that in itself would be like a meditation. Rabbi Chaim Vital writes in the fourth part of *Sha'arey Kedushah* that those seeking prophecy would play music until they could get into a trance, at which point the music would stop.[119]

The most important thing to realize, though, is that the primary means of attaining prophecy was through meditation. Prophecy did not just come abruptly to someone. The prophet would have to meditate deliberately, and there were specific meditations for prophecy.

Meditation does two things: it relaxes the mind's reactions to all external stimuli and thus quiets down all the internal thought processes and normal reverie. In an ordinary state of consciousness the mind is filled with static. If you wish to see this static, just close your eyes for a few minutes. You will see a rapidly changing series of superimposed images which constitute a steady stream of internal stimuli. As long as you are seeing and hearing your own reveries, as long as you are talking to yourself, you are not going to hear God's voice. You have to quiet down all the mind's internal messages to itself, which is a very difficult undertaking. After you have learned to quiet down your mind, you

then have to gradually learn to listen and to see. This means that you have to sensitize your mind to hear the inaudible and to see the unseen.

This is like trying to get a very weak station on a radio and picking up a lot of static. If you have a good radio, you can fine tune it, cut down the static, and pick up a clear signal. Similarly, high-level meditation requires that you first of all eliminate all mental static. You may then be able to pick up a very faint signal that you cannot really hear. The next step is to carefully start turning up the volume.

Now imagine what will happen if your mind is not controllable yet when you turn up the volume. You will get your signal loud and clear, but, in addition, the static will suddenly return. At this point the volume is up ten-thousand-fold so that the static will actually cause a devastating shock. This is why in a meditative state the faintest noise that one would not even hear under normal circumstances sounds like an explosion and is highly disruptive.

According to the *Zohar*, the storm wind that the prophet experiences is the wind of the lungs or, in other words, the breath.[120] The mind is so sensitized in this deep meditative state that the slightest sound or sensation is magnified a billion times. In such a state of consciousness, the breathing seems like a hurricane coming in and out of your body.

The first *Klipah* that the prophet has to overcome, then, is *Ruach Se'arah*, the "storm wind," the hurricane. This *Ruach Se'arah* comes *Min HaTzafon*, literally "from the hidden" or "from the north."[121] Both of these meanings point to the *Sefirah* of *Gevurah*-Restraint, which alludes to God's holding back and concealing His light,[122] and which virtually all Kabbalists associate with the *Tzafon*-North.[123] As we shall see, the double meaning of this term is significant in a number of ways with regard to Ezekiel's vision.

From God's point of view, for example, it is clear that the storm wind, and evil in general, originate as a result of the withholding of His light. This connects us back to the original idea of the *Tzimtzum* and the shattering of the vessels, which was to create a world where evil could exist so that man could have complete freedom of choice. This was essentially an act of *Gevurah*.[124]

From the point of view of someone trying to attain prophecy, on the other hand, evil is a barrier that must be overcome. When the prophet's mind is cleared through meditative techniques, the slightest thought is like a hurricane wind that disrupts his mind and prevents him from experiencing God. In order to penetrate this *Klipah*, therefore, and attain a perfect calm, he must turn to the *Tzafon*, to the *Sefirah* of *Gevurah*,

and discipline his own mind.[125] Isn't this the essence of becoming a vessel for the prophetic experience? Essentially, the prophet has to restrain all his thoughts and hold himself back completely. This is *Gevurah.*

Looking back at verse 3, "And the hand of God was upon him," we note that God's "hand" always refers to the left hand. The word *Yamin* (right), used on its own, is the right hand, whereas *Yad* alone, meaning "hand," refers to the left.[126] Hence, God's *Yad* (left hand) indicates a Divine restraint.[127] In the same way, the prophet is holding back his thoughts. When one is in this highly attuned state, he has overcome the first *Klipah*, the *Ruach Se'arah.*

At this point, you have to go deeper into the meditation. You have to quiet your mind even more. What do you see, then, when you get rid of all internal stimuli and quiet down the mind completely? Nothing. A very frightening nothing; an empty nothing. It is what you "see" behind your head. It might be a calming state, but on the *Klipah* level it is frightening. This is not plain meditation, this is meditation for prophecy. Now your mind is highly sensitized and you are experiencing an intense black darkness that envelops you like a cloud. In other words, imagine being in an immense dark room, like Mammoth Cave with the lights turned out; you are experiencing an acute lack of sensation, a sensory deprivation that is amplified a million times. You feel this overwhelming, frightening nothingness. This is the second *Klipah*, *Anan Gadol*, the "great cloud."

The next stage is the "flashing fire," or literally, "self-taking fire." In Hebrew, this is *Esh Mit'lakachat*, a very strange idea to translate. Some commentators interpret it as lightning because it comes down and "takes itself back."[128] Yet, what is fire? First of all, fire has the connotation of tremendous shame: the feeling that one is burning with shame.[129]

Imagine that you are meditating on a very high level and are just about to achieve prophecy. Every thought and memory is lucid and transparent and you see yourself for the first time without the static and jamming that shuts out most of our thoughts.

Imagine you start feeling a closeness to God and realize that God knows everything about you and everything you ever did. You are standing naked before God, with your memory wide open, completely transparent, without any jamming mechanism or reducing valve to diminish its force. You remember everything you ever did and see it in a new light. You see it in the light of the unshaded spirit, or, if you will, in God's own light that shines from one end of creation to the other. The memory of every good deed will be the sublimest of pleasures and most delightful bliss imaginable.

But your memory will also be open to all the things of which you are ashamed. The wrongs you committed burn; they are very painful, but it is worse than physical pain. It is not even like a psychological pain that you could hide or run away from. There is no possibility of rationalization, no dismissing it, no escaping it. It is a pain that is there.

Furthermore, you don't even want to hide; you realize that this fire and this shame are cleansing you. You are so totally open that you begin to appreciate the necessity of this pain because it makes you realize how really far away you are from the Divine.

According to this we can understand why the Ari says that Ezekiel experienced the fire of *Gehinnom* (purgatory).[130] This is a spiritual shame that cleanses a person of all his impurities. Fire burns because there is too much sensation. A concentrated amount of any sensation — light, sound or touch — is painful because it brings too much stimulus at once. Thus, the reference to fire, understood as an overabundance of stimulus, could point to the increasing sensitivity of the would-be prophet as he sees himself being totally purified.

Fire can be understood in another way. This involves the fire that we saw at Mount Sinai, when God spoke "out of the fire" (Deuteronomy 5:19). The Rambam points out that the very next verse states that God spoke "out of the darkness."[131] The problem being addressed here is that one usually thinks of fire as something bright and radiating. Darkness, on the other hand, absorbs and takes everything into itself. The question is, then, was it fire on Mount Sinai or darkness? The Rambam concludes that the fire they saw was a spiritual or *elemental* fire. Unlike the fire that we are familiar with, the element of fire does not radiate; it is black fire or what we would call negative energy.

We discussed the term the *Zohar* uses for the Vacated Space, *Botzina de Kardenuta*, the Lamp of Darkness.[132] Just as the original light, *Or Ain Sof*, was infinitely bright, the *Botzina de Kardenuta* was infinite negative energy that carved a space within this first light. This is how the *Tzimtzum* occurred.

In order to get a good picture of this negative light, you can imagine an infinite space filled with infinite light; all that exists is light. Suddenly, you switch on a lamp of negative energy. What happens? The place is flooded with negative light. This is the meaning of the *Midrash* that refers to the Supernal Torah written with a black fire on white fire.[133] You can imagine white fire. It is a dazzling white light. Imagine a dazzling black. Imagine a black that is as vivid as a blinding sun. Now in an ordinary state of consciousness you could not imagine it. In a meditative state you can. You can imagine a black that becomes deeper and deeper

and glows and radiates and becomes blindingly bright.[134] Imagine a black light like that. That is the Lamp of Darkness, this brilliant, blinding, black light. Negative light. Just like the *Or Ain Sof* was infinitely bright, the *Botzina de Kardenuta* was infinite negative energy that carved a space within this first light.

If we put these two interpretations of fire together we come out with a very interesting idea. The shame of being far away from God and the fire of *Gehinnom* is the same fire with which God reveals Himself during the highest peak experience.

Actually, the same idea is brought in an ancient *Midrash*. The Talmud teaches that in the Ultimate Future there will be no *Gehinnom*. Rather, God will remove the sun from its sheath, whereby the righteous will be healed and the wicked burned.[135] This means that the same light both heals and burns. It all depends on how we experience it. At first it is painful to experience God's light. After this frightening purification, the same light is the greatest bliss.[136]

After the "self-taking fire," the text states that there was a "*Nogah*-Glow round about it." This black fire was surrounded by a special glow. To grasp what the *Nogah* is, we have to understand the concept of the *Klipat Nogah*. As mentioned, the three *Klipot* — the wind, the cloud and the fire — represent barriers and are considered evil. The *Klipat Nogah* is different; it is both good and evil. It is a barrier, and yet it lets something through. It is what could be called a semipermeable barrier. It is for this reason that it is said to glow: a very measured amount of God's light shines through the *Klipat Nogah* into the other *Klipot*. As we shall see, the Ari teaches explicitly that this *Klipat Nogah* is the means of nourishing the realm of evil. It is also the means through which the sparks of holiness embedded in the *Klipot* are set free and allowed to return to their source.

"From its midst was the likes of the *Chashmal* in the midst of the fire" (1:4).

Chashmal is usually translated as "electron" or "electra" in the Septuagint. This has led to a certain confusion about this word, because "electron" was an alloy of gold and silver in the ancient world. It was also an old word for amber. As an interesting aside, electricity was discovered long before Benjamin Franklin, by rubbing amber against cloth or wool. Amber is a fossilized resin of trees. People would rub it against cloth, and since it would produce a charge, they thought

they had discovered a force. Since it was made from electron, namely amber, they called it "electric." This is where our English electricity comes from. Similarly, when searching in Israel for some Hebrew equivalent for modern electricity, the word *Chashmal* was chosen because it seemed to have something to do with a power that radiates. In reality, however, it has no relation to Ezekiel's *Chashmal* which, in its simplest sense, appears to be describing a color, the color of *Chashmal*.[137]

It is the Talmud, on the other hand, that begins to unravel the mystery of the *Chashmal* on a deeper level. According to the Talmud, *Chashmal* comes from two words: *Chash*, meaning "silent," and *Mal*, meaning "to speak."[138] *Chashmal* is the "speaking silence." Let us examine it in terms of what Ezekiel is experiencing at the moment. He is trying to get to a level of nothingness where everything is tuned out but the image he wants to see. He has passed through four distinct stages and is now encountering a new double sensation. He is experiencing speech and silence at the same time. The verbal and non-verbal parts of his mind are experiencing different things simultaneously. In addition, he is now seeing something that looks like a "Speaking Silence."

In order to understand how one sees what is normally heard and vice versa, we can point out first of all that it is easier to hear nothing than to see nothing. The Ari makes a distinction between *Ain* and *Efes*, both of which imply nothingness.[139] When you look at *Ain* you think you are seeing nothing. Compared to *Efes*, however, *Ain* is only apparent darkness. *Efes* is the real absolute no-thing. Applying the same logic to the process of hearing, there might be a similar difference betwen *Chash* and *Sheket*, both of which imply silence. *Sheket* is silence, and *Chash* might be the total absence of any hearing sensation whatsoever. In other words, *Sheket* might be the analogy of Mammoth Cave with the lights turned out and *Chash* would be the parallel of looking behind your head. The prophet identifies it as a silence that speaks because, in the end, the entire vision culminates in verses 27 and 28 when God speaks to him out of the *Chashmal*.

Now we can understand that the "color" of silence Ezekiel claims to have seen involves a very advanced level of synesthesia. This is one of the common phenomena in very deep meditative states where a person will actually smell or hear colors or see sounds. An explicit allusion to this phenomena occurred at the revelation at Sinai, where the Torah says, "and all the people saw the sounds" (Exodus 20:15). Rabbi Akiba states that this is to be taken literally: "they saw what is normally heard."[140] According to his view, then, there is clearly a reference to synesthesia in this account. Ezekiel is now speaking to people who are

aware of this phenomenon, and he wants to describe what nothingness looks like. How does one describe this in two words or less? The vision of nothingness is the color of silence.

The Merkavah as a Meditative Experience

Let us now look at the five levels of Ezekiel's vision in a meditative sense. In the first level of meditation, you are aware of your own life processes. This corresponds to the "storm wind" in Ezekiel's vision. Then it blanks out: you can see the potential there, but it is an opacity. This is the "great cloud." The next stage before actually coming to nothingness is the "self-taking fire," a blinding negative light. Once you have experienced these three levels, then, all of a sudden, you start seeing a glow around the fire, and inside this glow, in the fire that is in the middle of it, you see something the color of *Chashmal*.

The "storm wind coming from the north" is, as mentioned, the first *Klipah* the prophet has to break through. *Ruach* means spirit. Hence, *Ruach Se'arah* can mean a storm wind or a stormy spirit. Ezekiel was in the process of breaking out of the physical world and out of *Asiyah* into *Yetzirah*. *Ruach* is the part of the soul that corresponds to *Yetzirah* and *Ruach HaKodesh*. He is about to come in contact with this level. In order to this, however, he must first experience the turmoil of his own *Ruach*, not *Ruach HaKodesh*, but *Ruach Se'arah*.

Ezekiel is then on the level of *Ruach*, and he feels his soul going through a storm, a whirlwind, a hurricane. It is more than a stormy wind. He is feeling a stormy *Ruach*, which is the level of God reaching out to him. He is not touching the pure and holy part of it, but rather, as the *Zohar* says, the outer essence of this holiness, which is the realm of evil. He has to break through the realm of evil before he can get into the realm of holiness.[41]

This is the *Ruach Se'arah min HaTzafon* (storm wind from the north). Whereas "south" represents *Chesed* and God's attitude of giving freely, "north" represents *Gevurah*, God holding back. This means that when we want to get into the spiritual experience we have to break through and overcome barriers. By definition, these barriers come from *Gevurah*, God holding himself back. Hence, they come from *Tzafon* which, as we have seen, besides meaning "north," implies "hidden" and "concealed."

One can wonder, at this point, what is the need for barriers? Why does God hold Himself back? The Magid of Mezrich (1704–1772) compares this to a father teaching his son how to walk. Holding the child's

hand, the father steps backwards. The more steps the child is able to take, the more the father pulls back. This is repeated many times until the child learns how to walk by himself.[142]

We know that no outside force can hold God back. Thus, if a barrier does exist that can restrain God, it is something that He Himself created for a purpose. We know that God wants us to have a separate identity and the free choice that goes along with it. Therefore, in order to allow us to exist, He has to create barriers and hold Himself back. It is only once we are separated from God that our returning to Him can be the source of the greatest possible pleasure. God wanted man to discover Him and come close to Him. This is the real purpose of creation. When a person discovers God behind all the barriers and achieves this by his own efforts, there can be no greater pleasure.

After the storm wind coming from the *Tzafon*-North, Ezekiel sees the next barrier, *Anan Gadol*, the "great cloud." The word *Gadol*-Great alludes to the attribute of *Gedulah*-Greatness. *Gedulah* is the alternate name for the *Sefirah* of *Chesed*[143] and hence points to God's desire to bestow His love and blessing abundantly and without restraint. The image of the cloud, on the other hand, points to a certain opaqueness and obscuring of the Divine. As a *Klipah* that the prophet experiences, it represents an acute feeling of nothingness, a complete blackout of all sensation. *Anan* and *Gadol* thus seem to be directly opposed to one another.

By fusing these two concepts together, however, Ezekiel is telling us that this lack of sensation is really pregnant with potential. The *Anan* that clouds the prophet's mind is an opacity that hides the vision, but it contains the potential for the vision coming true. Just as a raincloud represents the potential for rain, so the *Anan* is a necessary stage that one must pass through in order to receive the prophetic influx, which itself is analogous to rain.[144] Thus, the *Anan Gadol* is not quite prophecy, for the prophet still has not been able to extract his vision from the cloud, but it is clearly the potential for prophecy. It is called *Gadol* because it is associated with *Chesed*, God's attribute of giving. It contains a gift that has not been given yet, however, and it is therefore still an *Anan*, a barrier.

The "self-taking fire" which follows the great cloud is, as mentioned, the absorbing fire, the fire of darkness or negative energy. The cloud, then, was one level of opacity. The negative fire is a more advanced level in which one is zeroing in on nothingness. The underlying message is that in order to have the vision, one has to experience this nothingness first.

As we have seen, the reason why Kabbalists very often speak of getting close to God as the experience of nothingness is because the closer you get to God, the more you are divorcing yourself from all your worldly conceptions. You are getting into a realm where there are none, and since your mind can only deal with worldly conceptions, the closer you get to God the more you have to discard your normal categories of light, space and time, and even thought itself. Eventually, all you experience is nothingness. Yet, it is not a negative nothingness: it is a very positive nothingness.[145]

I was once discussing the *Klipot* of Ezekiel's vision in a small class and one of the students shared with the rest of the class some meditative experiences she had had which I felt were a help in understanding the vision from a different perspective:

> When we were reading the passage about Ezekiel in which he describes his vision and talks about the wind, the cloud, and then the fire and the glow around it, I had the impression that people were seeing these things as obstacles that one has to fight and overcome on the way to having a prophetic vision.
>
> These "barriers" struck me as very familiar experiences that I myself and very many other people I know have had during meditation. It seemed to me that what he was describing is what a person goes through as he becomes more established in the meditative experience.
>
> For example, the first thing he says is that there was a stormy wind coming from the north. This is a common experience that many have had, including myself, in which you sit down to meditate and the mind is very active. People often refer to that as being a storm, in the sense that there is a lot of mental activity. What we referred to in class as a hurricane corresponds to that initial mental activity.
>
> The mental condition is very highly correlated with the physical condition. Some of the research that has been done on meditation shows that when a person just sits down, there is a lot of mental activity and the breath is stronger, more like the waking state. As a person continues to meditate, not only does that mental storm settle down, but correspondingly, the breathing becomes lighter and settles down. Even novice meditators who are meditating effectively experience that the breath becomes softer.

> To me, that suggests the first level that Ezekiel mentioned. Then, when he talks about the great cloud, that again reminded me of the next thing that happens in meditation, which is often referred to as meditation coming from within, because you are less aware of the outside noise. It is a deep settling down where you are not aware of anything outward; the senses are in a kind of white cloud. Due to the absence of conscious stimulation, the senses have settled into themselves. At that level, people often experience "white noise," which sounds almost like a radio on after hours with no sound. It is like experiencing the subliminal hum that is always vibrating inside of us but which we are unable to hear.
>
> What comes next is for advanced meditators. I have heard that it is not uncommon that the next thing that happens is that people will notice a glow. It is like a band of fire that seems to be self-sustaining, a nonconsuming type of fire that does not get larger or smaller. It struck me that what Ezekiel is trying to convey is not that we have to try to get through the storm and the white cloud, but rather, that just as the system becomes more purified and as the nervous system becomes more habituated to the experience, this is what will happen along the way. It is sort of a reassuring guidepost to people that this sequence happens.

This is a valuable interpretation in that it comes from someone who has had no background in the subject and therefore is not reading something into the text. What she said about the *Klipot* not necessarily being evil is accurate; they are part of the process of having a vision. This is easier to see if you think of a *Klipah* as being the outer shell of a fruit or a nut.[146] This shell is not necessarily something bad. On the contrary, it protects the fruit until you are ready to eat it. The same is true in the case of meditation. First of all we are unable to experience the spiritual dimension directly. We clearly require some form of barrier between ourselves and God in order to exist. But more than this, these mundane "shells" that we have to discard on our way into the meditative state are the very things we will have to return to after we finish meditating. Perhaps the most important part of meditation is what we do afterwards. It is for this reason that we should strive to internalize the spiritual levels that we attain during meditation and prayer. It is not enough to have an experience; one must also be able to hold on to it and make it a part of oneself.

This student made a final comment that going through these stages is like a reassuring signpost saying to meditators: "You are on the right track, keep going!" to which I would like to add, "and don't get discouraged if nothing is happening yet," for discouragement is one of the major causes for lack of constancy in meditation.

The Glowing Husk

We discussed the root of evil in connection with the "Shattering of the Vessels."[147] We saw that, ultimately, evil comes from good; it is the fallen aspect of good. The Ari points out that God could have created evil as an independent entity, but He chose to make it through the process of the Shattering of the Vessels: evil had to be created as the fallen aspect of good so that one could raise it back to its source. Had it originated as evil, a human being would never have been able to reelevate it. In that case only God Himself could.

In the account of creation, we first have "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth" (1:1). This alludes to the realm of good. We then have "The earth was without form (*Tohu*) and empty (*Bohu*), with darkness (*Choshekh*) on the face of the depths (*Tehom*), but God's spirit (*Ruach Elohim*) moved on the face of the water's surface." The *Tikuney Zohar* associates *Tohu*-Void with the storm wind in Ezekiel's vision, *Bohu*-Emptiness with the great cloud, *Choshekh*-Darkness with the black fire and *Tehom*-Depths with the *Nogah*. The *Ruach Elohim* would correspond to the *Chashmal*.[148]

Looking again at the first verse, we can see that it is the realm of good. In verse 2, we have evil coming out of the good. Finally, that very evil is reelevated and transformed into good when God says, "Let there be light." This is the same process that we saw earlier: first we have the original *Sefirot* which shattered and fell and then were reelevated into *Partzufim*. Even without using any Kabbalistic terminology, however, we can see this process in the beginning of Genesis.

Our sages teach us that one of the main reasons why we were placed in the physical world was to overcome evil. It is in this way that we actually emulate God. The *Zohar* expresses this by stating that we too are to "turn darkness into light."[149] Ultimately, there is one Source of everything that exists, even evil. It is not that God actually created evil, but it is through His will that the possibility of evil exists.[150] Everything comes from God and must return to Him.[151] In the meantime, however, evil exists in order to be conquered.

We pointed out that the concept of *Klipah* does not necessarily denote that which is evil. It represents the idea that God restrains and conceals

His light from us in order to maximize our sense of accomplishment in overcoming everything that stands in the way of Godliness. In this sense, the existence of *Klipot* shifts the responsibility of bringing God into the world into our hands. It is only when we actively invite God into the mundane world, so to speak, that we have begun to fulfill our task. Otherwise, the world may not be evil, but it is certainly Godless.

It is related that the Kotzker Rebbe (1789-1859) was five years old when he asked his father, "Where is God?" His father answered, "God is everywhere!" He replied, "No, I think God is only where you let Him in."[152] This is a very profound statement and we can find a clear allusion to it in the Torah itself.

In the book of Leviticus, God tells the Israelites that if they follow His laws and are careful to keep His commandments, He will bless them with prosperity and peace and will make His presence felt among them. If not, He promises them that disaster and insecurity will make their lives miserable. In the hope that they will understand their mistake and repent, God will arrange things so that everything they do ends in failure. He then warns them: "If you are indifferent (*Keri*) to Me and lose the desire to obey Me, I will increase the punishment for your sins sevenfold" (Leviticus 26:21). Shortly after this, God again says, "If this is not enough to discipline you, and you are still indifferent (*Keri*) to Me, I will also be indifferent (*Keri*) to you ..." (26:23-4). God's final warning is: "If you still do not obey Me, and remain indifferent (*Keri*), then I will be indifferent (*Keri*) to you with a vengeance" (26:27-8).

The Rambam wonders as to the meaning of the word *Keri*, and concludes that it stems from *Mikre*, which means "chance" or "accident."[153] The meaning of these Divine warnings would thus be, "If you develop an entire philosophy of life that everything is chance, that I am not in charge, then I will let the world go exactly the way you think it is going. Since you think it is chance, then I will let it be chance and you will see how you do with chance. Not only that, but I will give you this world of chance with a vengeance. You want to stop playing the computer tape that runs the world? Try it!"

We can imagine again the computer that is controlling the traffic grid, and people complaining about it. The man in charge then says: "Since you do not like it, I will switch the computer off and let the lights operate at random." You would then have a situation of mass confusion and panic ending up in a total gridlock with nobody being able to move an inch. This is what the Kotzker Rebbe meant when he said, "God is only where you let Him in."

On the one hand, we can see from this that it is up to man whether

this world ends up as a place of Divine blessing or complete Godlessness. This follows directly from the fact that God must constrain His will and conceal His providence if man is to have free will to do good or evil.

On the other hand, the idea that everything could be left to "chance" is a startling one. It is clear that such a possibility could exist only if God Himself was behind it. This does not mean that God interferes with man's free will. It does mean, however, that man's ability to exercise free will is sustained by God. And this applies whether he is doing God's will or going against it.[154]

The paradigm of this is a *Midrash* which states that while the Israelites were erecting the Golden Calf they were eating Manna.[155] In other words God was nourishing them miraculously through the Manna while they were busy building and worshipping an idol. Essentially, this means that God gives us the power to act. When we take this power and use it against God's will, it is transmitted to the side of evil that conceals God's presence. It is then that the world seems to be running according to chance.

Ultimately, this process culminates in God's being hidden behind so many barriers and concealments that mankind does not even know that He is there. According to the Baal Shem Tov this is the meaning of the verse "Hide, I shall hide My face" (Deuteronomy 31:18).[156] If God were just to be hidden, people would look for Him. Here, however, the Baal Shem Tov sees a double concealment: God's hiding itself will be hidden.

This still leaves us with the question of how much power evil is allowed to take and how long it will be given the ability to conceal God's presence so absolutely. The Ramchal writes concerning this that the greater the concealment, and the more everything seems to be running on its own, the greater the revelation of God's presence when evil is destroyed.[157] In the meantime, everything that evil has, its very existence, derives from holiness. In the end, however, whatever evil took will revert to the good.[158]

We find a reference to this in the book of Job. Evil is described as something that "has swallowed power [that is not its own] but it shall vomit it up" (Job 20:15). This means that although the existence of evil is ordained by God, there is one thing that epitomizes the essence of evil that seems to go directly against everything Godly: evil is greedy. It "swallows" much more than its due, i.e., it claims ultimate dominion for itself. It is therefore necessary for us to know that this is also part of God's plan concerning evil. Evil will ultimately vomit back

all the sparks of holiness that it swallowed.[159] Without its source of nourishment, evil will completely cease to exist.

This is, of course, the whole mystery of *Teshuvah*. No matter how evil a person's acts are, no matter how great a sin one commits, it is always possible to repent for it. And it is through our repentance that we redeem the sparks of holiness that have fallen into the realm of evil as a result of our sins.

We can take this even further. According to the Baal Shem Tov, evil itself will be elevated in the World to Come. This is the meaning of the Talmudic statement that in the Ultimate Future God will take the *Yetzer HaRa* (Evil Urge) and ritually slaughter it.[160] The Baal Shem Tov asks why the *Yetzer HaRa*, the entire realm of evil, deserves to be killed, since despite all appearances to the contrary, it is God's faithful servant?

In the parable we saw above, the *Zohar* compares the *Yetzer HaRa* to the woman the king hires to tempt his son.[161] She is, after all, only a hired temptress and is not doing anything wrong; she is the king's trusted servant. Why, then, does the Talmud say that God is going to slaughter the *Yetzer HaRa* in the World to Come? The Baal Shem Tov points out that it does not say that God is going to kill the *Yetzer HaRa*, but rather, slaughter it. When certain animals are slaughtered ritually, they are made kosher. The slaughtering of the *Yetzer HaRa* in the World to Come means that God will make it into a good angel.

The World to Come is the dimension of ultimate reward and closeness to God.[162] It is the ultimate future when the period of testing for mankind will come to a close and the very concept of evil will no longer be necessary. At that time, God will rectify evil itself and return it to its root. The king will then invite the hired temptress into his palace, telling her, "You have done your job; now you can get your reward as well." The realm of evil will then be completely transformed and included in holiness.[163]

In the meantime, the realm of evil is needed to tempt us, to give us free will and free choice so as to maximize the struggle and the challenge of serving God in this world. In order for this to take place, however, an interface is needed for evil to be able to draw its nourishment from the Divine, some mechanism whereby the Divine can interact with evil and give it the power to function. Secondly, one needs a protection so that the evil should not have the power to blemish the realm of the Holy in any way.

According to the Kabbalah, the *Klipat Nogah*, the Glow in Ezekiel's vision, is the element of God's providence that sustains evil. It is merely a glimmer of God's light, like the afterglow that remains in the sky

after the sunset. While belonging to night and darkness, however, it still retains a glimmer of daylight. It is therefore referred to as *Klipat Nogah*, the "glowing husk." *Nogah*, then, is like a light in the darkness. The darkness is the realm of evil and the light in the darkness is the spark of good in the evil.[164]

The second mechanism is the *Chashmal*. This is the element of God's providence that protects the spark of good that is lodged in the realm of evil from being harmed or damaged. The *Chashmal* thus stands as a protective barrier between good and evil.[165] This is actually indicated in the numerical value of the word *Chashmal* (חשמל), which is 378. This is the same numerical value as the word *Malbush* (מלבוש),[166] which, as we have seen, means "garment."[167]

Thus, while the *Nogah* is the mechanism that allows the sparks of holiness to enter the realm of evil and nourish it, the *Chashmal* is the mechanism that protects the sparks while they are trapped in the realm of the *Klipot*. *Chashmal* is therefore likened to a garment, and *Nogah* is the semipermeable two-way membrane, the interface. As such, the *Klipat Nogah* represents something that can be used for good or bad. On the one hand, it allows evil to derive its nourishment from the holy. On the other hand, it serves as the channel for unbinding holiness and redeeming it from the realm of evil.

It is a mistake to think that the *Klipat Nogah* is neutral. On the contrary, it implies something extremely dynamic. The Ari states explicitly that all our *Avodah*-Service takes place in the *Klipat Nogah*.[168] This is because the *Klipat Nogah* consists solely of sparks of holiness that have fallen into the three evil *Klipot*-Husks. As opposed to the husks themselves that only God Himself can redeem, it is these sparks that we must elevate and return to their source. This is a dynamic process because these sparks must literally be unbound and set free. If they are not, they continue to function as a source of power and nourishment for the realm of evil.

The Hebrew word *Assur* is generally translated as "forbidden," but its literal meaning is "bound." Those things which are *Assur* according to the Torah are bound to the realm of evil, to the three *Klipot*. The converse of *Assur* is *Mutar*, which means "permitted" or literally "unbound." This category includes everything in the world that is not specifically prohibited. As we shall see, what is *Mutar* belongs to the *Klipat Nogah*.

For instance, let us say I take a cow, which is *Mutar*, but I neglect to slaughter it ritually or salt it, and so it becomes *Assur*. Or, if I have a Kosher steak and I forget to say the *Berakhah* (blessing) over it, it

again becomes *Assur*. If, however, I say the blessing on it, and eat it having in mind God's creative force in this food, then the act of eating becomes a way of returning the sparks of holiness in this meat back to the realm of holiness. In this way, the *Klipat Nogah* serves as an interface between good and evil. Depending on how we relate to the world around us we can tilt things toward the good or toward the bad. It is in this way that the Ari explains how all things which are *Mutar* belong to the Klipat *Nogah*.[169]

Let us now see this from the perspective of man's free will. Even if all the food I eat is *Mutar*, unbound, it is from the *Klipat Nogah*. This means that I am still free to do whatever I want with the energy I get from this food. If, therefore, I do someone a favor or any other kind of *Mitzvah*, I have used this food to increase light and strengthen the good. If, on the other hand, I insult someone or commit any other sin, it is the *Mutar* food that I ate which is nourishing the evil that I am doing. You have here a graphic example of the *Klipat Nogah* actually nourishing and nurturing the realm of evil. Since everything in the world which is *Mutar* can be used for good or for bad, it pertains to the *Klipat Nogah*.

This is not the case concerning things which are forbidden. As mentioned, everything that is *Assur* pertains to the first three *Klipot* which are barriers to Godliness. For instance, there is no way that a Jew could take a piece of *Chazir* (pork), and do a *Mitzvah* with it, under normal circumstances, unless it is a question of saving a life with it. If you eat something that is not Kosher, you are not allowed to make a blessing because it is like mocking God.[170] In a similar vein, the Talmud asks whether it is permitted to make a blessing on a stolen *Lulav* during the festival of *Succot*.[171] The answer is negative. Since the *Lulav* was stolen, it has become *Assur*, bound to the realm of evil. We see from this that the idea behind a *Berakhah* is to become aware of God's immanence in this food or object and release this holiness or immanence, thus making it available to us. If the food or object is *Assur*, we have no way of doing this, at least while the realm of evil still exists in its present form.

We mentioned that God will slaughter the *Yetzer HaRa* in the World to Come. This same idea is alluded to in the *Midrash*. The Psalmist says, "God executes justice for the sake of the oppressed; He gives food to those who are hungry. He releases those who are bound" (Psalms 146:7). In Hebrew, this last phrase is *Matir Assurim*, literally, "unbinds the bound." The *Midrash* on this psalm therefore concludes that "God will purify every unclean animal in the World to Come."[172] Another

Midrash[173] asks why a pig is called *Chazir* in Hebrew? It answers that the word *Chazir* comes from the root *Chazar*, which means "to return." The conclusion is, then, that even the pig will be transformed into a Kosher animal in the World to Come. This is far beyond what we as humans can do, which is to take something which is *Mutar* and use it for the good. In the World to Come God Himself will completely destroy evil by returning it to its source in holiness.[174]

On a deeper level, this explains why there will be no physical eating and drinking in the World to Come.[175] Our physical bodies come from the *Klipat Nogah*,[176] meaning that our animal natures can be used either for good or for bad. In the World to Come, however, evil will no longer be a factor to contend with. Although we will still have physical bodies, they will be so purified that we will be living on a totally spiritual plane.[177] The physical dimension itself will no longer conceal God's light.

The Speaking Silence

Let us now leave the far-reaching implications of the *Klipat Nogah* to analyze the *Chashmal*. There are a number of interpretations of the word *Chashmal*. As we saw, the Talmud explains it as the "Speaking Silence." In other words, this is the meditative quietness of the mind out of which the Divine speech comes. We find this thought in the Psalms: "Be still and know that I am God" (46:11). One can see this in the text of Ezekiel's vision itself. At the end of verse 27, Ezekiel sees the *Chashmal* again, at which point he falls on his face and God speaks to him. This shows the importance of the *Chashmal* for the process of Divine speech.

The Talmud also explains *Chashmal* as a mnemonic for *Chayot Esh Memallelot*, "living angels of fire speaking (praises)."[178] The letter *Chet* (ח) in *Chashmal* represents the *Chayot* of *Yetzirah*-Formation, whereas the letter *Shin* (ש) represents *Esh*, the fire. *Mal*, as we have seen, means "speaking."

The numerical value of the letter *Chet* is eight. As opposed to six which represents the six directions of the physical world or the six days of the week, and seven which represents an integrating factor that unifies and perfects the physical world, eight represents the spiritual realm that transcends the physical.[179] This is the reason that the commandment of *Milah* (circumcision) is performed when the male child is eight days old, and why Chanukah lasts for eight days.[180] The letter *Chet*, hinting to the number eight and to the *Chayot*, indicates that Ezekiel is transcending the universe of *Asiyah*-Making and entering the universe of *Yetzirah*-Formation.

Milah-Circumcision is the most ancient ritual of Judaism.[181] It

represents God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Through *Milah* God was establishing the fact that the history of this nation would transpire on a level that transcends the mere physical.[182]

The fact that circumcision was to be performed on the sexual organ is also of particular significance. It symbolized that this people would be set aside by an indelible bodily sign. This, together with the fact that the circumcision is performed on the eighth day, gave them the power to master and channel their physical passions.[183] It made the sexual organ into a "holy sign of the covenant" (*Ot B'rith Kodesh*, אות ברית קודש) through which they would be able to use the sex act to draw down souls from the highest spiritual levels.[184]

Milah-Circumcision thus pertains to eight because it embodies the idea of transcending the boundaries of the physical dimension. It was also the eighth commandment given to mankind,[185] following the seven universal commandments.[186] These seven commandments are referred to as the "Commandments of Noach's Sons" (*Mitzvot Beney Noach*, מצות בני נח).[187] They were meant to benefit humanity, serving as a basis of morality and ethics.[188] They are necessary to create a society in which people can live together in harmony. They therefore represent the perfection of the physical world.[189]

As the eighth commandment, *Milah* represents something even beyond this. Through *Milah* it would be possible to return to the level of Adam and Eve before the sin. In other words, mankind would again have direct access to the spiritual dimension. As we shall see, this explains why the first prophetic vision granted to Abraham followed immediately upon his circumcising himself in his old age. It also explains why *Milah* is intimately related to the prophetic experience in general. For *Milah* represents the highest level of spiritual perfection for mankind, a perfection that completely transcends the physical.

Another commandment that embodies the idea of eight is the day following the seven days of the *Succot* festival, *Shemini Atzeret* ("Retreat of the Eighth Day").[190] During the week of *Succot*, we wave the *Lulav* in all six directions and we go into the *Succah* which surrounds us on all six sides, while we always remain in the middle. The seven days of *Succot*, then, represent the idea of perfecting the world. This is also reflected in the seventy *Korbanot*-Offerings that we brought during *Succot* for each of the seventy nations of the world.[191] Our direct connection to God is stressed, however, by the single *Korban* we were to bring for Israel on *Shemini Atzeret*. On this day, the *Midrash* says, God asks us to linger after all the other guests have gone, to enjoy a private celebration with Him.[192] There is no other particular *Mitzvah* on

Shemini Atzeret. In fact, nowadays, the way we express this intimate relationship is to dance with the Torah. This day is thus also called *Simchat Torah* ("Rejoicing with the Torah"). As Rabbi Nachman says, dancing and somersaults involve jumping off the ground in an effort to defy gravity.[193] When we dance with the Torah, we are expressing the fact that on this day we are able to transcend the physical.

The idea of transcending the limitations of the physical world is not restricted to meditative practices. In general it involves going beyond any barriers and boundaries that were thought to be impossible to overcome.

We are living now in a time of breaking barriers. Everything that people always assumed to be impossible is becoming possible in our time. God may be teaching us a very important lesson with this: we are capable of doing things that we never thought possible. The paradigm of this is running a marathon race. If you ask anybody, "Can you run twenty-six miles?" most people will give you an emphatic "No!" The truth is, however, that if we would spend enough time and really take it seriously, we could do it.

The point is that the average person is capable of training himself to do something that is presently completely beyond his capacity. Furthermore, this is not limited to physical accomplishments. It is also true on an intellectual and spiritual level. Many people say, "I can't understand this; I will never be able to master this subject. This is too hard for me." If a person would really work at it, however, he or she could do anything. If this is true on a physical level, how much more must it be true on a spiritual level, because a person is much more flexible spiritually than physically. By becoming a spiritual marathoner, a person could accomplish things that he would not dream possible. As well as constant practice, the essential point is not to think that you are going to achieve your desired goal overnight. It is clear that if somebody wants to run a marathon, he must begin by running a short distance and increase it gradually. This is true of any undertaking; the secret of success is knowing how to pace yourself well.

When people try to advance spiritually there are two dangers. You first have the person who will think that he cannot do anything and remains stagnant, or else you have the person who, with a burst of enthusiasm, will go too far too fast. Yet, just as a person can damage his body by too much physical strain, a person can go much further than his *Nefesh* (soul) can take him and end up in a spiritual coroner's office or in an insane asylum, which happens only too often.[194]

I always refer to what the Klausenberger Rebbe said on the verse, "[Jacob] had a vision in a dream. A ladder was on the ground and

its head reached up toward heaven" (Genesis 28:10). If you go up step by step, you could start on the ground and reach the highest level. Jacob, however, saw angels who were "going up and down this ladder" (*ibid.*). If you want to go up like an angel, you will go up and then back down again. The Klausenberger Rebbe explained that this is what happens to those who want to zoom up overnight. This is a very important lesson for *Ba'aley Teshuvah*, those who have returned to Judaism. The first thing that is often done with a *Ba'al Teshuvah* is to try to lay the entire load on him all at once. Very often, the person's psyche is so devastated by the process of becoming observant that he or she becomes mentally unbalanced. Somebody says to him, "Today you start keeping the Sabbath, and tomorrow you have to wear the Chassidic garb. You have to make over your entire self-image. You must speak only in Yiddish (it doesn't matter if you don't understand a word) and you can use only your Hebrew name from now on." This is very dangerous and undesirable. The process could have taken two years in a healthy manner, but if it happens too fast, very often after five years the person still does not have his head on straight and sometimes never regains his balance. On the other hand, if it is taken slowly and surely, and step by step, it is very easy to become observant and retain your psychological balance very well.

The second syllable of *Chashmal* is *Mal*. As we have seen, *Mal* means "speaking" or "word," which together with *Chash*-Silence produces the "Speaking Silence." In addition, the Hebrew root *Mal* denotes "cutting" and is the basis for the word *Milah*-Circumcision.[195] This leads us to conclude that it is not by chance that the concept of circumcision is as closely related to speech, and thus to prophecy, as it is to procreation. This is illustrated in the case of Moses who, in order to convey to God how unworthy he felt to be the transmitter of His word, said, "I have uncircumcised lips" (Exodus 6:12; 6:30). We see, therefore, that in addition to the *Milah*-Circumcision of the organ of procreation, one could also have *Milah* of the tongue or lips. The Kabbalists refer to the first as *B'rith HaMa'or* ("Covenant of the Skin") and the latter as *B'rith HaLashon* ("Covenant of the Tongue").[196]

We see a further connection between the two in the case of Abraham. The *Midrash* says that when God appeared to Abraham, the Patriarch fell on his face, because he was not circumcised.[197] It is highly significant that until Abraham was circumcised prophecy was a terrifying experience; it was only after he was circumcised that he was able to hear God's message and remain standing.

How is *Milah* related to *Chashmal*, God speaking? Also, if *Chashmal* is

the "Speaking Silence," how is it connected with *Chashmal* being the *Malbush*, the protection against evil? In attempting to answer these questions we will see that the concept of the *Chashmal* is pivotal in understanding the relationship between the spiritual and physical dimensions. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the entire mystery of prophecy and of the Kabbalah tradition in general is locked up in this one single word. *Milah* pertains to *Yesod.* The *Sefirah Yesod* is, as we have seen, the organ of procreation, and the organ of *Zivug*, joining, which is very important; it is the only means through which two human beings become one. The end of verse 29:11, in Chronicles I, from which we know the names of the *Sefirot*, reads "for *Koll* is in Heaven and Earth." The word *Koll*, meaning "All," appears in ancient Kabbalistic sources like the *Bahir* and the *Zohar* as an alternate term for the *Sefirah* of *Yesod.*[198] The *Zohar* states that *Koll* is the *Midah*-Attribute that unites heaven and earth. This means that the *Sefirah* of *Yesod* is the connective principle that can unite the spiritual and the physical. The word *Shamayim*-Heaven always indicates the masculine principle of *Zer Anpin* in Kabbalah. *Aretz*-Earth indicates the feminine principle of *Malkhut. Yesod* is what unites the two. We have then the same type of penetration of the spiritual coming into the physical, as in a relationship between a man and a woman. The prophetic experience is referred to as *Zivug* (sexual union), therefore, because the spiritual always comes down to the physical and penetrates it.[199]

At the moment he is having the vision, Ezekiel is physically in this world. When he has this experience, the spiritual comes down to him in *Ruach HaKodesh.*[200] The level of *Ruach* is that of *Zer Anpin.* It is the masculine level coming down to this world, whereas the world (*Aretz*) is the feminine level. Again, to experience *Ruach HaKodesh* is almost an act of penetration, one's physical being penetrated by the spiritual. The connecting link between the two is *Yesod.*

What will happen now if this *Yesod* is covered by a *Klipah*, which is the spiritual equivalent of the male foreskin? When I allow myself to be penetrated by the spiritual, when I open myself to the spiritual experience, the danger exists that I will be unable to receive the spiritual influx because of this admixture of evil. I must then cut away the foreskin from my spiritual experience. This is the *Mal* of *Chashmal*, or the *Milah* which protects the spiritual and allows it to penetrate the physical without the interference of the forces of evil.[201]

We can see this in another way. We have spoken about the *Klipot* as being very vague evil things. In a meditative sense, however, the *Klipot* are the noise level and all the extraneous thoughts that come to mind

when a person is trying to meditate, or to pray with *Kavanah* (directed consciousness). We usually think that we must eliminate this mental static altogether. The possibility exists, however, that these very thoughts can be used to bring us to a higher level of meditation and closeness to God. In the sense that they serve a positive purpose, these thoughts are then actually part of the process of *Tikkun*-Rectification. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov observed that if other thoughts come into your mind when you are worshipping, it means that these are the very things you have to rectify with your prayers.[202] If a person is trying to connect himself to God and another thought inserts itself, that thought is coming there because it needs to be elevated.

I once attended a class given by the Klausenberger Rebbe and a strange cat walked into the room. The Klausenberger Rebbe looked at it and said, "You have your *Tikkun* already; you can leave." The cat walked right out of the room. I was there when it happened. In other words, everything in the world needs its *Tikkun* (rectification). There may have been a soul attached to the cat who needed to hear a few words of Torah as a *Tikkun*. In the same way, if a thought comes into your mind in the middle of the prayers, that thought needs a *Tikkun*, and so, you must elevate it at that time.

In order to enter the meditative state, therefore, a person must use one of two ways of quieting down the static in the mind and experiencing silence. This is essentially getting to the level where *Mal*-Circumcision is *Chash*-Silence because it is either removing or rectifying the barriers that prevent us from hearing God's voice. Finally, it is in this state that we commune with God.

Why then can't we hear God speaking to us, now? The main reason is because there is too much static in our minds. God is sending us a comparatively tenuous signal. When we have a radio with a high static level we cannot hear anything due to the noise. Yet, as we refine the receiving equipment and lower the noise, then we start hearing the signal. Once we hear it we can turn up the volume a little and even retain a special kind of spiritual equilibrium when the "program" is over. When we have a high noise to signal relationship, however, turning up the volume will just get louder and louder static. That is one of the reasons why outside the Land of Israel we cannot have real prophecy, because the vibrations are full of static. In Israel it is much purer since we are much closer to the source.[203] It is like trying to get the *Kol Israel* radio station in America as opposed to getting it in downtown Tel Aviv. The signal is much stronger there.

The Mitzvah of Circumcision

Let us look at what the male sexual organ represents and why *Milah*-Circumcision is such an important *Mitzvah*. The organ of procreation has three basic functions. First and foremost, it involves something which is *Mutar*, procreation itself. It can be something that is holy, and something that is unholy. In this sense, it is like the *Klipat Nogah*.

Second is pleasure. It is the source of one of the most profound pleasures that a human being can experience. People have devoted their entire lives, and sometimes their entire fortunes as well, to this pleasure.[204] It is a very strong drawing point, and for obvious reasons: if a person wasn't drawn to it, the species would cease to procreate and cease to exist.[205] In fact, immediately after Adam sinned, among the things one sees was that his sex desire was very greatly enhanced. The obvious reason for this is that he was now mortal. As soon as death was decreed against man, as soon as man became mortal and he had to reproduce himself, he had to have a strong desire for reproduction.

The third function of the male organ is the disposal of waste matter. It is interesting that human physiology works out that the same part of the body which produces life excretes waste. Biologically, there is no real reason why it should be this way. What is the reason for this association?

Before we can answer this question, however, we must first understand the concept of *Yesod* and its three functions in Divine terms. First of all we have procreation. All the Divine influx, all the creative power with which God sustains and directs the world, comes through the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*. When we are able to receive this creative power properly, we have fulfilled God's *primary purpose* in creating the world. In a manner of speaking, God derives great pleasure from this. The main pleasure on the level of the Divine thus comes through the procreative concept of *Yesod*. The prophet alludes to this relationship when he says "God will rejoice with you as a groom rejoices with a bride" (Isaiah 62:5).

The third function of *Yesod* is related to what we have called the *secondary purpose* of creation. On the Divine level, evil derives its nourishment from the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*.[206] Although God does not create evil, it is part of His plan to sustain it. This means that He is subjecting His providence to our actions in order to maximize our free choice and hence reward. This is fine as long as the energy He is giving us is used to fulfill His will. When, however, we channel this energy into committing a sin, evil is enhanced. It is clear that God has no pleasure from this. The energy that evil is sustained with is therefore called "waste matter."[207]

According to the Ari, the letter *Chet* (ח) represents the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*, which parallels the male organ. In *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby* he points out that this organ contains two channels, one for reproduction, and one for discharging waste. These are represented by the two legs of the *Chet*. The right leg, representing the procreative potential of *Yesod*, is the source of good. The left leg, representing the discharge of waste matter, is the source of evil.[208]

The *Zohar* points out that the left leg of the *Chet* is attached to its roof by a very thin thread. If you break this connection, and remove the left leg just a hairsbreadth away from its place, you no longer have a *Chet* (ח), but a *Heh* (ה). In other words, if you break the source of waste matter, you have a *Heh*.[209]

The *Zohar* continues and explains that this is precisely the difference between *Matzah* (מצה), the unleavened bread we eat on *Pesach*, and *Chametz* (חמץ), leavened bread.[210] *Matzah* and *Chametz* have exactly the same letters except for the *Chet* and the *Heh*, and the only difference between these two letters is that as soon as the left leg is removed from the *Chet* by a fraction of an inch, it will become a *Heh*. In *Chametz* this leg acts as a channel for waste matter that nourishes evil. In *Matzah* this channel is broken.

The two legs of the *Chet* thus teach us an important distinction. As we noted, there does not seem to be any biological explanation for the male sexual organ serving the additional function of discharging waste matter from the bladder. The Kabbalah tradition, however, does offer an explanation. Before Adam's sin, these two functions were separate. In other words, similar to the letter *Chet*, Adam's *Yesod* consisted of two distinct channels. If he had not sinned, he would have broken the left channel and completely overcome evil. The left leg of the *Chet* would have been removed, transforming it into a *Heh*. Instead, not only did the two channels become converged,[211] but his *Yesod* was covered by a *Klipah* (the foreskin) from which evil could draw its nourishment.[212]

According to the Kabbalistic model, the discharge of poisonous wastes would not have become the biological necessity that it is now if Adam had succeeded in overcoming his test. Again, the left channel of his *Yesod* would have become disconnected and atrophied. As a result, the entire realm of evil would have been deprived of its nourishment and ceased to exist. The world would have reached its final state of perfection. Adam himself would have been able to attain physical as well as spiritual perfection. Ultimately, he would have vanquished death and gained immortality.[213]

When Adam sinned and ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and

Evil, he lost the opportunity to gain immortality. At that moment, evil became an intrinsic part of his being. His very essence became filled with contradictions. His life became full of conflict and mental anguish and imperfection.[214] He became defiled and, as a result, he lost his connection to his perfected state. He was driven from the Garden of Eden.[215]

In addition, since the entire world was created for Adam, when he ate from the Tree of Knowledge, he brought the entire world down with him.[216] He could no longer detect God's presence within creation without overcoming tremendous obstacles. The light with which he had seen from one end of the universe to the other was hidden.[217] The power of evil to conceal Godliness was greatly enhanced.

It is for this reason that Adam's fall from perfection is seen as the human counterpart to the Shattering of the Vessels.[218] As a result of his sin, not only was evil given minimum existence by its attachment to the left channel of *Yesod*; by virtue of the *Orlah*-Foreskin, evil could now draw its nourishment from the sparks of holiness in the right channel. Even Adam's *Zera*-Seed could now nourish evil. It could become, as it were, "waste matter."

In order to rectify this situation or at least prevent evil from attaching itself to the reproductive channel of *Yesod*, we were given the commandment of *Milah*-Circumcision. Through *Milah* we remove the *Orlah* and guard the sanctity of the *B'rith*. Through *Milah* we rechannel human sexuality into the realm of holiness. *Milah* is thus equivalent to reciting a blessing before eating food that is permitted. It elevates marital relations to a level that goes far beyond the realm of the physical. It allows the sexual act to become a means for drawing down very high and sensitive souls into the world. These souls are needed to bring mankind closer to its state of perfection. They are thus instrumental in fulfilling the primary purpose of creation by overcoming evil and revealing God's presence in the world.[219]

Milah also serves to cut the foreskin away from our pleasure experience. The fact that pleasure can lead us in either direction requires that we remove the *Klipah* from the pleasure. Our desire for pleasure thus becomes a desire for pure holiness.[220]

We mentioned that the ultimate level of the *Yesod* relationship is attained when "the righteous sit with their crowns in their heads in the World to Come."[221] Based on the use of the word *Atarah* for "crown," we interpreted this statement as a reference to the male sexual organ and hence to the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*. Thus, the organ which is normally associated with the physical becomes a means of experiencing pleasure from the Divine. We can see now that this is only possible after circumcising and removing the foreskin that covers the crown.

One may wonder, why doesn't circumcision completely eliminate the *Klipot* connected with the *Orlah*? It is important to understand, however, that the fact that a person is physically circumcised does not mean that he is spiritually circumcised. The commentators state that the commandment of *Milah* is fulfilled completely only when a person keeps himself sexually pure, in thought, in word and in deed. As long as a person is not totally pure sexually, he has some spiritual *Orlah*.[222]

None of this is meant to imply that sex is something dirty or evil. To the contrary, Judaism looks upon sex as something beautiful and pleasurable. The Torah views sexual relations between husband and wife as something normal, desirable, and the one act that does the most to strengthen the bond of love between them.[223] But at the same time, the Torah realizes that when misused, sex can be a most destructive and debilitating force. Historians tell us of entire civilizations that have fallen as a result of sexual corruption, and here again, this view is reflected in the Torah's teachings.[224]

The type of sex that the Torah proscribes is that which is irresponsible, exploitative and destructive. The commandment of *Milah* was given as a safeguard against such activity.

We mentioned that Adam's *Yesod* was covered by an *Orlah* (foreskin) after the sin.[225] Since man's actions have a definite effect on the spiritual dimension, you would therefore expect the Divine *Yesod* to have an *Orlah*-Foreskin as well. In other words, now the *Shefa* or Divine sustenance comes down, but it has to go through the *Klipah*. Not only that, before we can experience the pleasure of the spiritual, before we can go to the source of spiritual power, we have to go through the *Klipah*. This is what Ezekiel experienced.

How does a prophet like Ezekiel get into *Yetzirah*? The analogy of *Yetzirah* in *Atzilut* is the connecting *Vav* of *Zer Anpin*. *Asiyah* is connected to *Yetzirah* through the same element which connects *Zer Anpin* to *Malkhut*, which is *Yesod*. Ezekiel starts from *Asiyah*, which is the feminine world, and he is going up to *Yetzirah*, the masculine world. Since *Yesod* connects the masculine to the feminine, he must pass through *Yesod* in order to get into *Yetzirah* and see the *Chayot*, the living creatures of fire. As Ezekiel goes through *Yesod*, he must first go through the *Orlah*, which he experiences as the three *Klipot*. Whenever a person has *Ruach HaKodesh*, he naturally has to encounter the *Orlah*, and that is the *Klipah*.[226]

This gives us an additional insight into the *Midrash* which says that when God first spoke to Abraham before he was circumcised,

Abraham fell on his face. He could not tolerate prophecy. It was totally overpowering because the *Klipah* he encountered was totally uncircumcised. After he was circumcised, however, he was able to stand up. This is because the *Klipah* around *Yesod* leading into *Yetzirah* was correspondingly rectified.

We learn from this that a person cannot have a true spiritual experience unless he can latch on to *Yesod* in a circumcised state. In fact, this is why Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden after the sin and why a rotating sword, which represents the power of the *Klipah*, was set up at the entrance of the Garden to prevent his return.[227] The Ari explains that the Garden itself represents the level of *Yetzirah*.[228] Before he could get past this sword and gain entrance to the spiritual experience of *Yetzirah*, he had to overcome this *Klipah* in himself.

The same idea is seen in the fact that a Jew who is not circumcised is among those who have no share in the World to Come.[229] Since in the World to Come the concept of *Yesod* will be completely without a foreskin, the pleasure associated with it will be one of pure spirituality. Someone who is not "circumcised" will thus be incapable of enjoying the radiance of the *Shekhinah* that will shine there. On the contrary, for him the experience of *Gan Eden* will be one of *Gehinnom*. As we have seen, the pain and shame of *Gehinnom* is represented by the third *Klipah*, the self-taking fire that Ezekiel saw. The same radiance that the righteous will experience as their reward will be felt by someone who is not circumcised as the very opposite. Essentially, this will serve as a powerful purification for that person so that he will then be able to remove his own spiritual *Orlah*.

This explains another enigmatic *Midrash*. The *Midrash* says that somebody who is circumcised cannot enter *Gehinnom*. Abraham therefore stands at the entrance of *Gehinnom* and de-circumcises everybody who must enter.[230] The meaning of this is that by not keeping oneself sexually pure, a person automatically cuts himself off from spirituality. This is referred to as Abraham (who embodies the concept of circumcision) stretching the person's *Orlah* over his *Yesod*.

This brings us now to the concept of *Karet* (spiritual excision), or the inability of the soul (*Nefesh*) to experience the spiritual dimension as a result of an individual's sins. The two major places where one finds the penalty of *Karet* is going into the Temple[231] in a state of uncleanliness[232] and for sexual transgressions (*Arayot*).[233] Essentially, sexual transgressions represent putting something pure, in this case the *Yesod*, into the wrong receptacle. The Temple, on the other hand, represents entering the level of the Garden of Eden or *Yetzirah* and

experiencing the spiritual dimension directly.[234] This can only be accomplished in a state of purity. Entering the Temple in a state of impurity is therefore a contradiction in terms.

This enables us to understand a general principle that we already saw in the case of Abraham standing at the entrace to *Gehinnom*. The punishment is very often just the logical consequence of one's actions. In this instance, the punishment for entering the Temple in a state of uncleanliness caused by the misuse of the *B'rith*-Covenant of Abraham results in *Karet*. This *Karet*, however, is not only a punishment. It actually is telling us what this person did wrong in spiritual terms.[235]

Karet means that the soul will be cut off from its spiritual source. The word for soul that the Torah uses in such a case is *Nefesh*.[236] This indicates that *Nefesh*, which is the feminine aspect of the soul, is cut off from *Ruach*, which is masculine.[237] This is equivalent to saying that the universe of *Asiyah* is cut off from *Yetzirah*. As a result of an imperfection in *Yesod*, these two levels are unable to unite.

We can now understand why such great importance is attached to the commandment of *Milah*, and why the main sins punishable by *Karet* involve a perversion of *Yesod*, of *Milah*. If *Milah* is imperfect, there is a corresponding blockage between *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*, and the male and female parts of the soul cannot be coupled. Hence, the Torah says that the *Nefesh* is cut off. A proper *Zivug*, on the other hand, can bring down a *Neshamah*, which parallels *Beriyah*. This means that with the proper use of *Yesod* we can reconnect to the highest levels of the spiritual dimension and bring God's light down into the world.

The Chayot

"From its midst was the form of four *Chayah*-angels (Living Creatures) — this was their appearance — they had a human form" (1:5).

Verse 5 introduces the *Chayot*. A *Chayah* is an animal, a living creature. The term *Chayah* or *Chai* actually denotes a primal life-force. It points to a creature that is able to receive its life-force from its progenitors and transmit it to its progeny. This is exactly the function of the *Chayot* in Ezekiel's vision. Their job is to receive life-force from the highest levels of the spiritual dimension and transmit it. It is for this reason that they are associated with the level of *Yetzirah* and *Ruach*. They are the transmission lines of the spiritual dimension.[238]

These *Chayot* are the first discernible forms that Ezekiel sees at the entrance to *Yetzirah*. Later on, in the tenth chapter, he refers to these

same *Chayot* as *Cherubim*: "This is the *Chayah* that I saw under the God of Israel on the river *Khebar* and I knew that they were *Cherubim*" (10:20). As we shall see, this change of names is significant and indicates that Ezekiel's prophetic vision is becoming progressively sharper and more refined. In the meantime, it is important to note that he identifies the *Chayah* and the *Cherub* as different aspects of the same thing. The first thing that Ezekiel sees, then, after passing through the realm of the *Klipot*, is the *Cherubim*.

According to tradition, the *Cherubim* appear in two other key places that we have already identified. The *Cherubim* on the Ark in the Holy of Holies in the Temple were a focal point for the prophetic experience.[239] These *Cherubim* in turn represented the *Cherubim* that guard the entrance to the "Tree of Life" in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). The "Tree of Life" corresponds to the *Sefirot* of *Atzilut*[240] and refers to the highest spiritual experience that a prophet can attain.[241] This confirms again that Ezekiel is trying to get into the Garden of Eden, into the prophetic state of Adam before the sin. As he begins to transcend the bonds that tie his mind and soul to the physical world, he is actually approaching the "Tree of Life." The first thing he encounters are its guardians, which are the *Cherubim*.[242]

We find in Genesis: "God formed (*yatzar*) man..." (2:7), meaning that when Adam was first created he functioned totally at the level of *Yetzirah*-Formation.[243] Since *Yetzirah* is the level of *Ruach*, he was constantly on the level of *Ruach HaKodesh*. In other words, his natural state was what we would now consider a higher state of consciousness. Among other things, he could communicate with God at will, because his natural state was that of prophecy.[244] This is the level of the Garden of Eden.

As a result of eating from the Tree of Knowledge before it was permitted to him,[245] Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden, from the universe of *Yetzirah*, into our physical world, to a mental state which is essentially a mental state of *Asiyah*.[246] Now he was prevented from returning to his previous state by the *Cherubim*, the guardian angels of *Yetzirah*. Together with a "flaming rotating sword" (*Lahat HaCherev HaMit'hapekhet*), these two *Cherubim* were stationed at the entrance of the Garden of Eden, "to guard the path of the Tree of Life" (Genesis 3:24).

It is clear that the *Lahat HaCherev* represents the forces of the *Klipah* that form a shell around the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life. This is indicated in the word *Cherev*-Sword, which derives from the root *Chirev*, "destruction" or "desolation."[247] *Lahat* means "flame,"

and in connection with *Cherev* denotes a "burning sword" or "flaming blade of a sword."

The expression *Lahat HaCherev* can also be understood as a flashing fire that gives the impression of being a sword. It is for this reason that *Lahat* has the connotation of speed and hence denotes sleight of hand.[248] It can also refer to certain forms of magic and demonology.[249] We thus find the word *Lahat* used to describe the sorcery with which the Egyptian magicians tried to duplicate Moses' and Aaron's prophetic signs.[250]

According to Rabbi Abraham Abulafia (1240-1296), the "flaming rotating sword" is a warning against spiritual dilettantism. He writes that the Divine wisdom has both a right side and a left side. If a person is worthy, he is able to enter through the side of holiness, and the sword becomes a mirror through which he can perceive the Divine. If he is unprepared and unworthy, he can be destroyed, both spiritually and psychologically, by the fire of this sword.[251]

We learn from this that the prophetic experience is fraught with danger. The higher one ascends, the more barriers one must overcome.[252] In other words, when trying to get into the Garden of Eden, one could take the wrong path and end up completely confused. He could be overwhelmed by the powers of destruction (*Cherev*) and the powers of sorcery (*Lahat*). For this reason, while one must break through the barriers, one must also be careful not to enter too close. One must constantly avert his gaze, going "back and forth" like the *Chayot* on Ezekiel's vision. This is the meaning of what the *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches:[253] "And if your heart runs, return it to its place, as it is written, 'the *Chayot* ran and returned' (Ezekiel 1:14)."

In verse 4, we were introduced to the storm wind, the great cloud, and the flashing fire. We saw that the fire is characterized as a negative energy field, a frightening radiating darkness. Out of this darkness, like the dawn, came the faint glow of the *Klipat Nogah*, and finally, the vision of the *Chashmal*. Both of these emerged "from the midst of the fire."

Immediately following this, at the very beginning of verse 5, Ezekiel sees his vision of the four *Chayot*. Their form emerges from the *Chashmal* which is within the fire. It is for this reason that the *Chayot* are repeatedly described in terms of fire. They had "the appearance of burning coals of fire" (1:13) and they "ran and returned like a vision of lightning" (1:14). For one thing, this connects the *Chayot* with the *Cherubim* and the burning sword that guards the way to the Garden of Eden. In addition, however, the fire motif that we find throughout

Ezekiel's vision becomes a vehicle for describing the highest levels of the spiritual experience. As we have seen, the concept of fire involves the shame of *Gehinnom*, on the one hand, and the revelation of the Divine Presence on Mount Sinai, on the other. It is the same fire.

From his vantage point in *Yetzirah*, Ezekiel thus makes his way up beyond the *Chayot* into the universe of the Throne and ultimately into *Atzilut* (1:26). This is followed immediately by a composite vision of 1) the Man of *Atzilut*, 2) the *Chashmal*, 3) the *Nogah*, 4) the Rainbow and 5) God's Glory. All of these are elements of the *Merkavah*-Chariot, the system through which God reveals Himself and controls the reins of creation. They are all described as *Mareh Esh*, a "Vision of Fire" (1:27).

By now Ezekiel is completely overwhelmed. This, however, is only a preparation. Only after visualizing the entire structure is he able to focus clearly enough to hear a prophetic message. The account therefore ends, "I fell on my face and I heard a voice speaking" (1:28). As the commentaries note, all the prophets visualized the entire *Merkavah* before hearing a word. The only one to describe it explicitly, however, was Ezekiel.[254]

Returning to Ezekiel's description of the *Chayot*, it is clear that, beginning from verse 5, his vision is becoming more and more complex. As he enters more deeply into the prophetic state he is also able to pay closer attention to details that were possibly overlooked at first. He sees, for instance, that the four *Chayot* have the form of a man (1:5). Further on, he sees that the form of the face of each *Chayah* is that of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle (1:10). In the second vision Ezekiel has of the *Chayot*, again, each has four faces (10:14). In this last case, however, the first face is that of a *Cherub*, the second of a man, the third of a lion and the fourth of an eagle. Instead of the ox we found the first time, we have a *Cherub*. It is important to realize that when one of the faces of this angel is a *Cherub*, Ezekiel calls it a *Cherub*. This is in distinction to it having the face of an ox, in which case it is called a *Chayah*. Shortly after he sees the second vision, the *Cherubim* ascend and Ezekiel identifies them with the *Chayah* that he saw while he was in the river *Khebar* (10:15). The only difference is that now, instead of having the face of an ox, it has the face of a *Cherub*.

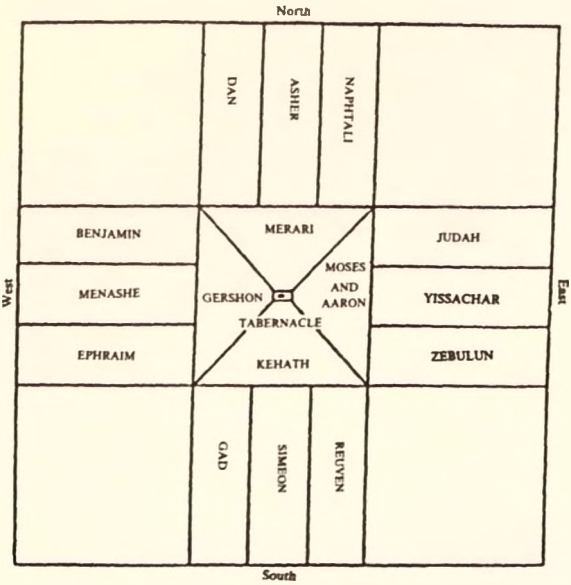
The Talmud gives us a valuable insight into the vision of the *Chayot*. First of all, it clarifies that the face of a *Cherub* is similar to that of a young child. It then asks if the face of the *Cherub* and the face of the man in Ezekiel's vision were one and the same. Based on the form of the *Cherubim* on the Ark in the Temple, the answer is that one portrays a smaller face and the other a mature face.[255]

What bothers the Talmud, however, is how Ezekiel could see the same *Chayah* with the face of an ox in the first vision and the face of a *Cherub* in the second? The explanation is that it originally had the face of an ox and Ezekiel prayed to have it changed. His argument was that since the ox was an accuser of Israel, in the sense that it was a reminder of the sin of the Golden Calf, how could it then become a defender? The *Cherubim* on the Ark, on the other hand, represented the highest form of intimacy between God and Israel. We thus learn from Ezekiel's prayer that one of his main tasks as a prophet was to intercede on behalf of his people. By virtue of the fact that the face of the ox was missing in the second vision, we see that his request was granted.

The Zodiac

A number of commentators on the Bible state that the four faces of the *Chayot* were represented in the four *Machanot*-Encamptments of the Israelites in the desert.[256] The lion was Judah; the ox was Joseph, or actually Ephraim; the man was Reuven. This is because Reuven had found mandrakes in the field that resembled the form of a man.[257] As a result of this incident, his flag had the form of a man on it. Finally, the last camp was that of Dan, whose emblem was an eagle with a snake's tail.

The four faces are also related to the signs of the zodiac. If we look at the twelve signs of the zodiac as four triads, the middle constellation of each triad corresponds to Ezekiel's four *Chayot*. In the Aries-Taurus-Gemini triad, Taurus is the ox or the bull. In the Cancer-Leo-Virgo triad, Leo is the lion. In the Libra-Scorpio-Sagittarius triad, Ezekiel identifies Scorpio as an eagle with the tail of a snake. Finally, in the Capricorn-Aquarius-Pisces triad, the center constellation is Aquarius, which has the face of a man. We see, then, that the four faces of the *Merkavah* correspond almost exactly to the four center signs of each season: the ox, the lion, the scorpion — seen as an eagle with a snake's tail — and Aquarius, which is a human being. The twelve tribes are likewise divided into four major camps of three tribes each. To the east we had Judah-Yissachar-Zebulun; to the south, Reuven-Simeon-Gad; to the west, Ephraim-Menashe-Benjamin; to the north, Dan-Asher-Naphtali.



It is important to realize that although the tribes follow the signs of the zodiac, the Jewish people as a whole were lifted above the level of the *Mazalot* (constellations) by virtue of their receiving the Torah.[258] The concept of *Mazalot* is essentially a physical concept. It is a channel through which spiritual forces come down to the terrestrial.[259] The more a person can establish direct contact with the spiritual dimension, on the other hand, he can bypass the influence of the stars to a great extent. This is done primarily through prayer.[260]

We are thus allowed to do character analyses through astrology, but predictions are forbidden to us. The source for this prohibition is the Biblical verse: "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 18:13).[261] In other words, the more we perfect our relationship with the spiritual dimension, the more God is going to do for us to change the natural course of events, thus making any action based on astrological predictions superfluous.

We have seen that man's soul constitutes the "inner space" of all creation. The *Olamot*-Universes, in particular the physical dimension, were made for man, and to a great extent their ultimate *Tikkun*-Rectification is dependent on what course of action human beings will take.[262] It is up to man to reconnect everything in the physical

world of time and space to its supernal source in order to reveal God's presence in every detail of our mundane existence. In terms of the zodiac, therefore, it is no surprise that each month of the year is designated by a different spelling of the Tetragrammaton.[263] There are twelve possible permutations of the Tetragrammaton.[264] Each one connects us to the inner purpose of each month of the year and helps us to bring down God's transcendental and supernatural light into our lives. When we say the "Blessing of the Month" (*Birkat HaChodesh*) and the "Blessing of the Moon" (*Birkat HaLevannah*) we are to have in mind one of these permutations.

We can now understand the different aspects of Ezekiel's vision as a unified whole. The *Chayot* of *Yetzirah* represent the vehicle — the *Merkavah* — through which God reveals Himself in the world. These *Chayot*, in turn, are the interface between the higher levels of *Atzilut* and *Beriyah*, on the one hand, and the *Ophanim* of *Asiyah*, on the other. Actually, it is for this reason that some Kabbalistic sources identify the *Ophanim* with the astronomical bodies of *Asiyah* while the *Chayot* are placed on the level above these.[265] Ezekiel thus emphasizes a number of times that "the *Ruach*-spirit of the *Chayot* was in the *Ophanim*" (1:20-21). What Ezekiel is telling us is that each subsequent level of the spiritual domain is a vehicle for the one above it. This is true all the way up to the highest spiritual levels and beyond. Ultimately, however, it is up to man to reveal God's immanence in every universe and the Kabbalah tradition contained in Ezekiel's vision is a key factor in this.

It is not by chance, therefore, that Ezekiel received his vision immediately prior to the destruction of the First Temple. As we have seen, once the Temple would be destroyed, and the remainder of the Jewish people exiled from their land, prophecy would cease to exist. From the point of view of Israel's mission to be a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 42:6), this catastrophe would be equivalent to the Shattering of the Vessels and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Like the original sparks of holiness that fell from *Atzilut*, the people of Israel would now be scattered like seeds into the realm of the three *Klipot*. They would become defiled, cut off from their source, and barred from reentering the Temple, the level of the Garden.

In order to retain some connection with their mission, therefore, and to resist being completely swallowed up in their exile among the nations, they needed Divine protection.

It is for this reason that Ezekiel was shown the vision of the *Merkavah*-Chariot at this time. This vision contained the promise that God's special

providence would never be withheld from the nation of Israel, no matter what. It therefore served as a guarantee that Israel would never be cut off completely from its connection to the transcendental.

The vision of the *Merkavah* also contains the entire Kabbalah tradition and all the secrets of prophecy that were given to Moses and handed down throughout the entire period of the prophets. It contains, therefore, the promise of the return of the prophetic spirit when the period of exile is over.

The Rambam thus writes that prophecy will have to be restored before the coming of the Messiah.[266] As we have seen, however, prophecy does not occur automatically, but must be cultivated with extensive disciplines through very specific practices. Before the Messianic era, therefore, these practices will have to be revealed and taught. Only then will prophecy be restored and God's promise to Joel be fulfilled: "After that, I will pour out My spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions" (Joel 3:1).

Notes

Chapter 1

1. R. Abraham Abulafia (1240-1296), *Sefer HaCheshek*, p. 31a, *VeZoth LeYehudah*, p. 15.
2. *Avoth* 1:1; *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 1:1-3; *Nachalath Avoth*, Introduction; R. Yitzchak Abuhav in *Midrash Shmuel* on *Avoth* 1:1. *Cf. Likutey Torah* (HaAri), *Ekev* (Ashlag, Tel Aviv, 5730), p. 244.
3. *Vayikra Rabbah* 1:3; Maimonides on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1, Thirteen Principles of Faith no. 7; *Shiur Komah* 16 (31c). *Cf. Ikkarim* 3:11; *Avodath HaKodesh*, *Chelek Sithrey Torah* 23(132a); *Tikuney Zohar* 18 (p. 31b). Also Rashi, *Megillah* 15a, *s.v. BeShlama*.
4. Moses thus had access to all 49 gates of wisdom; *Rosh HaShanah* 21b; *Nedarim* 35a; *Shemoth Rabbah* 42:8; *Zohar* 1:260b (top), 2:115a, 3:280a (end); *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 7b), 22 (p. 68b), 32 (p. 76b, top); *Shiur Komah* 13:8; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef*, *Devarim* (Koretz, 1780), p. 166 c, d.
5. Moses was always in a potential state of prophecy; *cf. Shabbath* 87a. He could receive God's revelation at will, in a state of waking consciousness, at any time and at any place; *cf.* Exodus 33:11; Numbers 12: 6-8; *Shemoth Rabbah* 2:9, 2:12; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4; *Zohar* 1:171a; Rashi on Deuteronomy 34:10; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:6; *Or HaShem* (Crescas) 3:6:2; *Shiur Komah* 16 (31a); *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:5; *Nefesh HaChaim* 3:14.
6. Ramban on Exodus 34:19; *Shiur Komah* 16; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6; *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:6.
7. The Torah is thus often referred to as *PaRDeS* (פרדס), an acrostic for *Peshat* (simple meaning), *Remez* (allusion), *Drush* (exposition) and *Sod* (mystery). See *Zohar* 3:110a; *Tikuney Zohar Chadash* 102d; *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, *VaEthChanan* (p. 79). *Cf. Chagigah* 14b; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:28; *Zohar* 1:26b; *Yoreh Deah* 246:4 in *Hagah*; *Sifethey Cohen* (Shach) *ad. loc.* 246:6; Alshekh on Job 28:16; R. Meir Poppers, *Or Tzadikim* 22:18. When the fifth level, *Razin Sethimin* (hidden mysteries) is added, these parallel the five levels of the soul and the five universes; *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, *HaAzinu* (77c), quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Yithro* 9.
8. *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:1-2.
9. *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 1:3; *Kuzari* 2:28; *Baal HaTurim* on Numbers 27:20. These sources indicate that the "spirit of prophecy" that Moses imparted to Joshua included the details of the mysteries of the spiritual realm. Accordingly, Joshua reached the tenth level of prophecy, the highest level next to that of Moses; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:45.
10. *Midrash Tehillim* 90:4. See *Pesikta* 31 (198a). Commenting on Psalm 90 which is called "A Prayer of Moses," the *Midrash* notes that, "Moses composed eleven psalms (90-100) which contained the techniques of prophecy," thus indicating that these psalms were to be used as a means of attaining prophecy. See also *Shabbath* 15b, Maharsha *ad. loc.*; *Yerushalmi*, *Shabbath* 6:2, *Eruvin* 10:11, where Psalm 91 is called "Psalm of the Stricken Ones." This name is clarified in the *Midrash* (*Tehillim* 91:1) which states that when Moses ascended into the spiritual realm on Mt. Sinai, he recited this Psalm in order to be protected from the forces of evil; *cf. Zohar* 1:48a.

R. Hai Gaon writes that this Psalm was meant to protect the ascending mystic against going insane when he attempted to penetrate the mysteries of the spiritual dimension; *Teshuvah*, quoted in *HaKotev*, *Ain Yaacov*, *Chagigah* 14b; see *Sha'arey Orah* 1 (3b).

11. Since the preparations for prophecy were extremely rigorous, every individual who desired to attain the prophetic state had to have a master and guide. With the exception of Isaiah, every prophet in the Bible received his prophetic powers through his teachers; *Vayikra Rabbah* 10:2; *Pesikta* 16 (125b); *Mekhilta* on Exodus 12:1. See 1 Samuel 10:5, 10:11, 19:18-24, Abarbanel *ad. loc.*; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4:9.
12. The innermost chamber of both the Sanctuary and the Temple was the Holy of Holies in the center of which stood the Ark of the Covenant and the Cherubs. The entire structure of the Ark and the Cherubs is described in detail in Exodus 25:10-22, 37:1-9. They were made under the personal supervision of Moses after he descended from Mt. Sinai; Exodus 40:18. God thus said to Moses, "I will commune with you, and I will speak with you from above the ark-cover, from between the two Cherubs, which are on the Ark of testimony" (Exodus 25:22), thus indicating that the primary influence of prophecy came through these two Cherubs in the Holy of Holies. What was true of Moses was true of the other prophets as well; *Derashot HaRan* 8 (Jerusalem, 1974) p. 128; *Avodath HaKodesh*, *Chelek Sithrey Torah* 4:25; Abarbanel on 1 Samuel 3:3. See *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 12 (163b).
13. Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon with King Yekhoniah eleven years prior to the destruction of the First Temple. The Ark had already been concealed by King Yoshiah, however, and prophecy was already extremely difficult to attain; *Yoma* 52b; *Tosefta Yoma* 2:13; *Seder Olam Rabbah* 24; *Yad, Beth HaBechirah* 4:1; *Kuzari* 3:39 (48b). *Cf. Avodath HaKodesh*, *Chelek Sithrey Torah* 28. See Chapter 11, notes 43 and 44.
14. *Mishnah Chagigah* 2:1 (11b, 13a). From the Greater Chambers we see that this referred to practice and not mere theory; *Hekhalot Rabatai* 21.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Megillah* 17b; *Targum* on Song of Songs 7:3; Rashi, Bartenura on *Avoth* 1:1; Rashi, *Bava Bathra* 15a, *s.v. Anshey*. See Ezra 2:2, Nehemiah 7:7.
17. For the significance of this number, see *Sanhedrin* 1:6 (2b), 17b.
18. The Great Assembly was led by Ezra at the beginning of the period of the Second Temple, when prophecy was about to cease totally. As the Supreme Court of the Jewish People, they undertook to enact legislation that would make Judaism viable in the diaspora. Thus, they also fixed the Bible canon and ordained the various standard prayers and services; *Sefer Chasidim* 1016; Rashi, *Bava Bathra* 15a, *s.v. Kathvu*; *Berakhoth* 33a; *Megillah* 17b; *Yad, Tefillah* 1:4. Most importantly, they abolished the "lust for idolatry" that existed during the time of the prophets in order to prevent the masses from turning to idolatrous practices as a substitute for true prophetic meditation; *Yoma* 69b; Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna (HaGra), commentary on *Seder Olam* 29. See *Meshekh Chokhmah* on Numbers 17:17 (end of *BeHaAlotekha*), who derives this from Zekhariah 13:2; *Torath Chaim*, quoted in *Etz Yosef*, *Ain Yaacov*, *Yoma* 69b.
19. *Cf. Chagigah* 14b, *Tosefta Chagigah* 2:1.

20. *Cf. Avodah Zarah* 18a; *Sanhedrin* 14a; *Berakhoth* 61b; *Pesachim* 50a; *Eikhah Rabbati* 2:2; *Kinot LeTisha B'Av, Arzei Levanon* by R. Meir ben Yechiel (c. 1140).
21. Rabbi Akiba received the *Merkavah* tradition from Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah, a leading sage of the 1st century. Rabbi Yehoshua was Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's main disciple as well as a direct link in the succession from Rabbi Nehunia ben HaKanah; *Avoth* 2:8; *Succah* 28a; *Bava Bathra* 134a; *Chagigah* 14b; *Tosefta* 2; *Sefer HaTaggin* (Paris, 1866), in *Otzar Midrashim* p. 564.
22. See R. Saadia Gaon, Introduction to *Sefer Yetzirah* (Jerusalem, 5732) pp. 17, 33; Moshe Botril on *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1; *Kuzari* 4:25 (42a); *Or HaShem* 4:10; Rabbi Yitzchak de Lattes, responsum at beginning of *Zohar*; *Pardes Rimonim* 1:1; *Shalshelet HaKabbalah*, p. 63. See *Korey HaDorot* 30a, Zvi Benyamin Blaamau's introduction to *Sefer HaEshkol. Cf. Sanhedrin* 65b, 67a.
23. Concerning the revealed tradition, it is taught that all the major Talmudic texts (*Mishnah, Tosefta, Sifra, Sifri*) follow Rabbi Akiba; *Sanhedrin* 86a; *Iggeret Sherirah Gaon* (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 27. Also see *Gittin* 67a, Rashi *s.v. Otzar*. Although these texts were not committed to writing by Rabbi Akiba, their teachings had been *worded* by him, and it was this precise wording that was taught orally; *cf. Berakhoth* 47a; *Shabbath* 15a; Maharitz Chayot, *Shabbath* 6b. It is possible that Rabbi Akiba also produced an oral text of *Sefer Yetzirah* for his students to memorize. In this respect, it would have been no different than the rest of the oral tradition. At first it was transmitted by word of mouth, written notes being kept privately in order to preserve the traditions. These notes were collections known as "hidden scrolls" (*Megillot Setharim*); *Bava Metzia* 92a, Rashi *s.v. Megillat*. It seems highly probable, however, that the *Sefer Yetzirah* was already in its present form when the *Mishnah* was redacted in 204 C. E.
24. The name *Bahir* is derived from the first verse quoted in the text, "And now they do not see light, it is brilliant (*bahir*) in the skies" (Job 37:21). It is called the "Midrash of Rabbi Nehuniah ben HaKanah," particularly by Ramban; see Ramban on Genesis 1:1, 2:7, 24:1, 28:29, 46:1, 49:24; Exodus 2:25, 15:27, 20:8; Leviticus 23:40, 26:16; Numbers 15:31; Deuteronomy 16:20, 22:6, 33:12, 33:23. Similar to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, most Kabbalists attribute the final redaction of the *Bahir* to Rabbi Nehuniah's school; *cf. Metzaref LeChokhmah* 12(31b); *Yuchsin* 10b; *Shalshelet HaKabbalah*, p. 57; *Korey HaDorot* 30a; *Shem HaGedolim, Sefarim, Beth* 33.
25. Rabbi Yishmael served as High Priest just before the destruction of the Second Temple. He was Rabbi Nehuniah's disciple along with Rabbis Shimon ben Gamliel, Eliezer the Great, Akiba, Yonathan ben Uziel and many others; *Hekhalot Rabatai* 16:3. In the *Hekhalot*, Rabbi Yishmael describes how Rabbi Nehuniah taught him about the heavenly chambers and the names of the angels who guarded their gates; *Hekhalot Rabatai* 17:1, 22:4, 5. Also see *Zohar Chadash Ruth* 80a, 82d; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
26. It is one of the few ancient tracts that explicitly describe how to ascend through the mystical chambers in a spiritual vehicle (*Merkavah*) that one creates for oneself. The key appears to be a type of mantra meditation where a series of Divine Names is repeated 112 times. See Part II, note 69.

27. Rabbi Shimon left the cave in Meron around the year 138, shortly after the death of Hadrian. The school that he established continued after his death, and some seventy years later, his disciples wrote down his main teachings, forming the main body of the *Zohar*. These later writings were distinguished from the "first edition" (*Chabura Kadmaah*) which was committed to writing by Rabbi Shimon himself. *Cf. Zohar* 3:219b. See *Kisey Melekh*, Introduction to *Tikuney Zohar*, *s.v. BeAggadah* (p. 14); *Sichot HaRan* 278. The final edition of the *Zohar* was apparently written by Rabbi Abba, see R. David Luria, *Kadmut Sefer HaZohar* 5:2.
28. R. Chaim Vital, Introduction to *Etz Chaim*, p. 18*ff.*; *Shivechey HaAri*, p. 2a; *Emek HaMelekh*, Introduction, 2(10b); *Toledoth HaAri*, p. 152; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*), Second Introduction no.2.
29. *Cf.* Psalms 119:126; *Gittin* 60a; *Temurah* 14b; *Yoma* 69a; *Menachoth* 99b; *Zohar* 3:128a; *Likutey Moharan* 60:1.
30. See above, notes 23, 24, 27. In the case of Rabbi Shimon's school, the *Zohar* consisted of volumes of notes in manuscript form which were hidden away in a vault and not uncovered until the 13th century. After limited circulation in the 1270's and 1280's, these notes came into the hands of R. Moshe de Leon (1238-1305) who finally edited and published them in the 1290's. The *Zohar* itself provides a clue for this long period of concealment, stating that it should be revealed in preparation for the final redemption, twelve hundred years after the destruction of the second Temple. Since the Temple was destroyed in the year 70, this would mean that the *Zohar* was meant to be revealed in 1270; *Zohar* 2:9b; *cf. Shem HaGedolim*, *Sefarim*, *Zayin* 8.
31. The revealed tradition included the *Mishnah* which was redacted by Rabbi Yehudah the Prince in 188 C. E. and published thirty years later in 218 C. E., as well as the *Tosefta*, *Mekhilta*, *Sifra*, *Sifri* and *Talmud Yerushalmi* which were all published within the next century and a half.
32. *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*), *ibid.* This would ensure that the Oral Torah would continue to be transmitted by word of mouth from master to student. A written text, on the other hand, no matter how perfect, would always be subject to misinterpretation; *cf. Chagigah* 11b; *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:71; *Ikkarim* 3:23; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Torah SheB'Al Peh*, *Daleth* (3:231a).
33. See *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, p. 36b; *cf. Pri Etz Chaim*, p. 361, *s.v. Shaalti.*
34. Introduction to *Etz Chaim* (R. Chaim Vital), p. 19, *s.v. VeGam.*
35. *Rashby* is an acrostic of the name Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.
36. Literally, the "Gate of the Sayings of the Sages of blessed memory."
37. Sasoon, Manuscript 290.
38. Thirteen Principles of Faith no.2; *Yad, Teshuvah* 3:7; *cf.* Deuteronomy 6:4.
39. *Ikkarim* 2:9: *Pardes Rimonim* 5:4. *Cf. Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:7, 2:10; *Derekh HaShem* 1:1:5.
40. *Derekh HaShem*, *ibid.*
41. *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:49; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 24; *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 7.
42. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 2:6.
43. *Pardes Rimonim* 3:1, 4:3, 4:9; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Beth David* (note) 1:42a, *Beth HaBechirah* (1:44a), *BaAsarah Ma'amaroth* (1:64b); *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 7 (84a). Our understanding of God's

relationship to the world is thus twofold, namely that He is both transcendental and immanent. He encompasses all of creation and yet fills it. This duality, however, is only due to our imperfect understanding of God, since He Himself is the most absolute unity; *Raya Mehemna*, *Zohar* 3:225a; *Reshith Chokhmah*, *Sha'ar HaYirah* 1 (9a); *Nefesh HaChaim* 3:4; *Tanya loc. cit.* (83b); *Likutey Moharan* 49, 64.

44. *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 1:4 (end), 3:0; *Or HaShem* 2:6:2- 4; *Sefer HaYashar* no.1; *Pardes Rimonim* 2:6; *Etz Chaim*, *Sha'ar HaKelallim* no.1; *Reshith Chokhmah*, *Sha'ar HaTeshuvah* 1 (101b); *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Beth Yisrael* (1:21b); *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 1:1:41, 2:13; *Derekh HaShem* 1:2:1; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 2; *Da'at Tevunot* (*Bnei Brak*, 1975) p. 4 *ff.*; *Likutey Moharan* 64. Also see *Zohar* 1:10b, 1:230b, 2:166b; *Sefer HaB'rith* 2:1:3. See Chapter 11, note 15; Chapter 12, note 8.
45. *Derekh HaShem* 1:5:1-2, 4:6:13.

Chapter 2

1. *Cf. Mesilat Yesharim* 1; *Zohar Chadash* 70d.
2. See *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 1:1, *Derekh HaShem* 1:1:1. God is defined as the Creator, as we find in the opening sentence of the Torah.
3. *Cf. Sanhedrin* 39b, Rashi *ad. loc. s.v. Oder*.
4. *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 1:2-3; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:13, 3:25; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 1:4; *Reshith Chokhmah*, *Sha'ar HaYirah* 1 (8d); *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:9-11; *Derekh HaShem* 1:1:2, 1:2:1. *Cf. Pesikta* 6 (57b).
5. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:25.
6. *Cf. Sanhedrin* 4:5 (37a).
7. *Ibid.* 38a; *Yerushalmi*, *Sanhedrin* 4:9 (23b); *Bereshith Rabbah* 8:5; *Emunoth VeDeyoth*, introduction to no.4.
8. See *Bereshith Rabbah* 8:1, 19:4; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 6a); *Levush Tekhelet* 1; *Ikkarim* 1:11.
9. *Esther Rabbah* 10:14.
10. *Midrash Tehillim* 31. See *Derekh HaShem* 1:2:1.
11. *Ibid.*, 2:6:4; *Shiur Komah* 13:3.
12. *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhoth* 6:1 (41b). *Cf. Targum ad. loc.*
13. *Sha'arey Orah* 5.
14. See *Orach Chaim* 5:1; *Zohar* 3:257b; *Etz Chaim* 1:1 (p. 24); *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 7 (82a). See R. Eliezer Rokeach of Worms (Garmiza) on *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1.
15. God is spoken of as being "eternal," that is, as existing outside the realm of time. Time as such does not apply to God Himself, only to His creation. God therefore has neither beginning, end, nor age, since these concepts would imply existence within a framework of time; *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 1:10; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 2:10; *Kuzari* 5:18 no.5; *Ikkarim* 2:18, 19; *Pardes Rimonim* 3:1. *Cf. Bereshith Rabbah* 81:2; *Mekhilta* on Exodus 22:3; *Vayikra Rabbah* 19:2 (end); Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes 3:15, Psalms 113:5.
16. *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 2:3 (45b); *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:61; *Kuzari* 2:2 (7a), 4:1 (4b); Ibn Ezra on Exodus 3:15, 33:21; *Sifra* on Leviticus 1:2. See *Pardes*

Rimonim 6:8 on Nechemiah 9:6; *Reshith Chokhmah, Sha'ar HaKedushah* 7 (156c); *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 2 (78a), 4 (79a); *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:2 end; *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Shemoth* 14.

17. This is the concept of God's immanence which implies that there is no place in creation that is devoid of His essence; *Tikuney Zohar* 57 (91b); *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:69. *Cf. Berakhoth* 10a.
18. Baal Shem Tov, quoted by R. Yisachar Baer of Zlatchov, *Mevaser Tzedek* (Lemberg, 5610); quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Re'eh* 8. See *Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri), *Re'eh* (p. 283), Isaiah 32:17 (p. 394); *Likutey Rama MiPano* in *Chevel Nevi'im*.
19. The four letters of the Tetragrammaton thus allude to the four supernal universes. The *Yod* corresponds to *Atzilut*, the universe of Divine Essence (*Elohut* in Hebrew); the initial *Heh* corresponds to *Beriyah*, the universe of the Throne; the *Vav* corresponds to *Yetzirah*, the universe of Angels; the final *Heh* corresponds to *Asiyah*, the physical world together with its spiritual aspect. See *Zohar* 3:92a; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 6b); *Pardes Rimonim* 19: 2-3; *Derekh HaShem* 3:2:5, 4:6:13.
20. See Chapter 9, "Giving and Receiving."
21. See above, note 10.
22. *Sefa Tal*, Introduction (4d); *Kellaley Chokhmat HaEmet* (Ramchal), Introduction (2a); *Likutey Moharan* 64:1; *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 6 (81a); *cf. Zohar* 3:47b; *Chulin* 60a (top), 60b; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:396.
23. *Cf. Shemoth Rabbah* 34:1; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:3. The concept of *Tzimtzum* essentially states that God's Essence originally filled all reality, and that in order to make a "place" for the universe to exist, God constricted His "light" and created a "vacated space" within Himself. It was in this "vacated space" that He created all worlds; *Etz Chaim* 1:2 (p. 27 *ff.*); *Mevo Shearim* 1:1:1; *Likutey Moharan* 49, 64. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 4:9, 6:3; *Shefa Tal* 6:1 (89b, 90d), 6:8 (101a); *Bahir* 14; *Zohar HaRakia on Zohar* 1:16a; *Kisey Melekh* on *Tikuney Zohar* 5 (p. 32b), *s.v. Hormenutha; Sha'arey Gan Eden, Orach Tzadikim* 2:1; *Pelach HaRimon* 4:3; *Derekh Mitzvotekha* (*Chabad*) *Emunat Elokut* 6 (51a), *Shoresh Mitzvat HaTefillah* 34 (136a). The *Tzimtzum* will be discussed at length in Chapter 13.
24. See above, note 22.
25. *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:49; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 24; *Tanya, ibid.*
26. *Tikuney Zohar* 57 (91b). See above, note 17.
27. Thus, the paradox of the *Tzimtzum* is closely related to the dichotomy of God's immanence and transcendence, of God's "filling" and yet "encompassing" all creation. For attempted resolutions to the paradox, see *Nefesh HaChaim*, 3:7-8, *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 7.
28. *Derekh HaShem* 1:1:5-6; *cf. Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:3-4.
29. *Midrash Tehillim* 103:4, according to reading and interpretation of *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:9-11. For other versions and readings, see *Berakhoth* 10a; *Vayikra Rabbah* 4:8; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:26; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 34; *Tikuney Zohar* 13 (28a).
30. *Kellaley Chokhmat HaEmet*, Introduction, p. 2a. See Chapter 5, note 26.
31. *Zohar* 1:23a; *Yad, Teshuvah* 5:1; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:17; *Emunoth VeDeyoth*

3:0, 4:4; *Reshith Chokhmah* 3:1 (101b). See *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 15 (35a), *Menachoth* 29b.

32. *Sotah* 14a.
33. The main difference between the spiritual and the physical involves the concept of space. Physical space exists only in the physical world. In the spiritual domain, there is no concept of space as we know it. See *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 2:5; *Pardes Rimonim* 6:6; *Etz Chaim* 1:2 (p. 27); *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:49; *Amud HaAvodah, Hakdamah Gedolah* no.15.
34. See *Amud HaAvodah, ibid.*, no.31; R. Yitzchak Ashlag, *Hakdamah LeSefer HaZohar* (in *Sulam*) no.9 (p. 5); *Idem., Talmud Eser Sefirot, Histaklut Penimit*, part 1, 1:14 (p. 15).
35. R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto discusses this in a number of places. See *Derekh HaShem* 1:2:1-2; *Da'at Tevunot* p. 3*ff.; Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 4, based on *Yerushalmi, Orlah* 1:3 (6a). See also *Zohar* 2:163b; *Pardes Rimonim* 25:3; *Likutey Torah* (HaAri), *HaAzinu*, p. 283.
36. *Derekh HaShem* 1:2:5. See *Koheleth Rabbah* on Ecclesiastes 7:13; *Sanhedrin* 37a; *Zohar* 1:134b; *Emunoth VeDeyoth*, introduction to chapter 4; *Ikkarim* 1:11. The Rambam (Maimonides) apparently disputes this in *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:13; *cf.*, however, *Leshem Sh'vo VeAchlamah. Sefer HaKellalim* (Jerusalem, 5684), Introduction (1b).
37. *Mesilat Yesharim* 1 (4a). *Cf. Eruvin* 13b; Tosafot, *Avodah Zarah* 5a, *s.v. She'ilmalei*; Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael* 46.
38. *Derekh HaShem* 1:3:4.
39. See above, note 19.
40. See *Bereshith Rabbah* 14:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:9; *Sha'ar HaGilgulim* 1; *Derekh HaShem* 3:1:4.
41. *Zohar* 1:13a (bottom); *Etz Chaim* 28:1 (p. 61, volume 2), 40:1 (p. 262), 40:14 (pp. 287*f.*). *Nefesh* is associated with *Asiyah*, *Ruach* with *Yetzirah*, *Neshamah* with *Beriyah*, *Chayah* with *Atzilut*, and *Yechidah* with *Adam Kadmon*; *Zohar* 2:94b.
42. *Zohar* 3:123b. See Ramban on Genesis 2:7; *Torath HaShem Temimah* (in *Kitvey Ramban*), p. 159; *Shefa Tal*, Introduction (4c); *Tanya, Likutey Amarim* 2 (p. 5b).
43. *Etz Chaim* 5:5 (p. 68). See *Chakamoni* (R. Shabbatai Donnelo) on *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:10, p. 133 (67a); HaGra *ad. loc.*; *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:15; *Raziel HaMalakh* 10a (23), 22a (73); *cf. Sanhedrin* 91a; *Bereshith Rabbah* 14:7; *Midrash Tehillim* 2:11; Rashi on *Chagigah* 12b, *s.v. Ruchot U'Neshamot.*
44. *Etz Chaim* 6:5 (p. 84), 40:10 (p. 281), 40:12 (p. 285), 45:1 (p. 345); *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:17.
45. *Berakhoth* 17a; *Yad, Teshuvah* 8:2; *Torath HaAdam, Sha'ar HaGemul* (in *Kitvey Ramban*) p. 307; *Tanya* 4 (8a *ff.*).
46. *Likutey Moharan* 21:4.
47. *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:1-4.
48. *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:1; *Derekh HaShem, ibid.*

Chapter 3

1. *Pardes Rimonim* 2:6; *Shefa Tal*, end of no.2; *Etz Chaim* 42:14 (pp. 314-315).
2. *Bahir* 10; *Tikuney Zohar* 42 (82a). *Cf.* Ecclesiastes 3:11, Rashi *ad. loc.*; *Koheleth Rabbah* 3:11:3.
3. *Zohar* 1:20a; 3:291b; *Etz Chaim* 1:4 (p. 37), 40:2 (p. 264); *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:5; *Tanya* 51 (72a).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Cf. Etz Chaim* 47:2 (p. 359*f.*); *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Toledoth Adam*, *Beth Hashem*, note *s.v. Inyan HaDa'at* (p. 8a).
6. *Lekha Dodi. Cf. Sanhedrin* 37a: *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 6a); *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 4:0; *Ikkarim* 1:11; *Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 123; *Likutey Moharan* 18:1-2.
7. *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a); *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 2:9 (86b). *Cf. Chagigah* 13b; *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 2:8.
8. *Etz Chaim* 1:4 (pp. 34-35); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot* 1; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:1, *s.v. Adam*; *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 20 (131b).
9. *Zohar* 2:239a, 3:127b, 3:257b. *Cf. Sha'arey Gan Eden* 2:1 (2b). Also see *Pardes Rimonim* 1:9 end.
10. *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (pp. 297-298); *Pardes Rimonim* 3:1.
11. *Zohar* 3:256b, end; *cf. Zohar* 2:42b, 2:121a, 3:290a. See also *Pardes Rimonim* 23:1, *s.v. Ain.*
12. *Pardes Rimonim* 3:1.
13. *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:69.
14. *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 51; *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 2 (77a *ff.*).
15. *Derekh HaShem* 1:2:5. See Chapter 2, note 36.
16. *Tanya* 39 (52b); *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:13, note *s.v. U'Lefi.*
17. *Pardes Rimonim* 16:1; *Kedushath Levi*, *Likutim* (p. 284).
18. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 4:7-9, 16:1; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:1; *Derekh HaShem* 4:6:13.
19. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:2-9.
20. *Etz Chaim* 44:1 (p. 326). *Cf. Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 102.
21. *Etz Chaim* 42:13 (p. 309 top).
22. *Zohar* 1:22a. *Cf. Nefesh HaChaim* 1:13.
23. *Pardes Rimonim* 16:1.
24. *Ibid.*; *cf. Nefesh HaChaim* 1:13, note *s.v. U'Lefi.* See also *Zohar Chadash*, *Bereshith* 17b; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:10; Ramban on Genesis 1:1; Radak on Isaiah 43:7; *Zohar* 1:263a; *Bahir* 13.
25. *Cf. Kedushath Levi*, *Bereshith* 1.
26. This is God's Throne mentioned in 1 Kings 22:19, Isaiah 6:1, Ezekiel 1:26.
27. *Zohar* 2:37a; *Avodath HaKodesh* 3:42; *Shiur Komah* 21. *Cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 1:11.
28. See above, notes 17, 23, 24.
29. See *Etz Chaim* 40:13 (p. 287); *Derekh HaShem* 4:6:13; Malbim on Ezekiel 1:1.
30. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:10. *Cf. Bahir* 13; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 30 (24b).
31. *Tikuney Zohar* 22 (68b, bottom); *Ma'amar HaIkkarim* (Ramchal),

HaHashgachah; *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 54. *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:14. *Cf. Zohar* 3:10a.

32. *Pardes Rimonim* 16:9; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) *1:51; Nefesh HaChaim* 1:13, note *s.v. U'Lefi.*
33. *Pardes Rimonim* 16:1, 7; *Pelach Rimon* 16:2; *Etz Chaim* 43:1 (p. 320).
34. See above note 30.
35. The concept of "makes peace" is the ultimate end embedded in the beginning of the creative process. Corresponding to the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, it represents man's ability to reveal God in the world *through his own efforts.* This very ability, however, is predicated upon an initial concealment of the Divine that sets the stage for man's struggle. Thus, man attains his own perfection on the one hand, but it is a perfection whose possibility was already programmed into creation from its inception on the other. The idea that God "makes peace" therefore intimates the ultimate interaction between the spiritual and the physical, between God and man.
36. *Mesekhta Atzilut* 5; *Pardes Rimonim* 16:1; *Avoth* 6:11, *Midrash Shmuel ad.loc. Cf. Zohar* 3:92a; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 6b). See R. Isaac of Acco, *Otzar HaChaim* (Guenzberg Ms. 775) pp. 92b, 112a, 116a.
37. Kabbalistically, *Adam Kadmon* is described as extending from the highest level of the Vacated Space and completely filling it, albeit in ever increasing concealment; *Etz Chaim* 1:4 (p. 36). As explained, God's will (*Adam Kadmon*) permeates the totality of existence. As the Tetragrammaton represents the totality of existence (was, is, will be) so the apex of the *Yod* fills the entire Name.
38. *Etz Chaim* 5:5 (p.69), 42:1 (p. 315). *Cf. Zohar* 1:8a, 1:25a, 1:236b, 1:237a, 2:136b, 2:155a, 2:191a, 2:237a.
39. *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6.
40. *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
41. For a full discussion of the significance of prophecy, see *Derekh HaShem* 3:3-5. Also in *Ma'amar HaIkkarim*, "Moses and Prophecy," Ramchal defines the purpose of prophecy: "God desired to reveal His will to man, and therefore prepared a process of revelation through which He makes Himself known in the physical world. Through this process, God reveals whatever He desires, whether it be His secrets and mysteries, concepts of His providence, or decrees that He is issuing regarding the world. This process is called prophecy."
42. *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
43. *Cf. Berakhoth* 7a.
44. *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:5. It is thus taught that "All other prophets saw through a dull lens, while Moses saw through a clear lens;" *Yevamoth* 49b, Rashi and Ramban *ad. loc.; Sanhedrin* 97b; *Vayikra Rabbah* 1:14; *Zohar* 1:171a; Rashi and Seforno on Numbers 12:6; Ramban on Genesis 18:2; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:6, Rambam on *Mishnah Kelim* 20:2; *Ikkarim* 3:17. We likewise find that "All other prophets looked through nine lenses, but Moses looked through only one;" *Vayikra Rabbah loc. cit.* See Chapter 1, note 4; Part II, notes 39 and 40.
45. See Chapter 1, note 12. The outer courtyard of the *Mishkan* thus paralleled the final *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, the universe of *Asiyah* and the level of *Nefesh.* The "Holy" (*Kodesh*) paralleled the letter *Vav*, *Yetzirah* and

Ruach. The "Holy of Holies" (*Kodesh Kodashim*) paralleled the initial *Heh*, *Beriyah* and *Neshamah*. The Ark of the Covenant paralleled the letter *Yod*, *Atzilut* and *Chayah*. The Tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments and the original Torah Scroll paralleled the apex of the *Yod* and *Yechidah* and represented God's Will (*Adam Kadmon*). See also Malbim, *Rimzey HaMishkan*, *Parashath Terumah*.

46. Exodus 40:17-34.
47. For full text of Ezekiel 1, see Part II, "Ezekiel's Vision."
48. *Chagigah* 13b, Rashi and Tosafot *ad. loc.*; *Zohar* 2:2b; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 4a).
49. *Tikuney Zohar*, *ibid.*; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
50. See Part II, "The Chayot."
51. See above, note 29.
52. *Chagigah* 14a. See *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:6.
53. Radak, Abarbanel, on Ezekiel 1:28; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:8; Rashi, *Chagigah* 13b, *s.v. Ra'ah*.
54. *Derashoth HaRan* no.8 (Jerusalem, 5734) p. 128; *Avodath HaKodesh*, *Chelek Sithrey Torah* 25. See *Bereshith Rabbah* 70:8.
55. See Numbers 7:89.
56. *Succah* 5b; *Chagigah* 13b; Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, on Exodus 25:18-20. *Cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 3:45.
57. Deuteronomy 31:26, Rashi *ad. loc.*; *Bava Bathra* 14a. See Radak, Ralbag, Abarbanel, on 1 Kings 8:9.
58. See Chapter 1, note 12.
59. See Chapter 1, note 13.
60. *Pardes Rimonim* 16:1, 7; *Pelach Rimon* 16:2.
61. *Chagigah* 13b; *Etz Chaim* 47:6 (p. 369).
62. *Chagigah* 13b, Tosafot and Maharsha *ad. loc.*; *Zohar* 1:167b, 2:58a, 2:202b, 2:246a *ff.*
63. *Shabbath* 151b; *Shemoth Rabbah* 31:14. See *Sichot HaRan* 40.
64. It is thus taught that God leads a person along the path that he has chosen to follow; *Makkoth* 10b; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 20:11; *Zohar* 1:198b, 2:50a; 3:47a; 2:207a. *Cf. Avoth* 4:2; *Mekhilta* on Exodus 15:16; Maharsha, *Avodah Zarah* 5a, *s.v. Mi*.
65. This is the concept of "measure for measure." See *Shabbath* 105b; *Nedarim* 32a; *Sanhedrin* 90a; *Mekhilta* on Exodus 14:26 and 18:11, *Targum* and Rashi, *loc. cit.*; *Or HaShem* 3:3:1 (72b); *Ikkarim* 4:9; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:17; *Derekh HaShem* 2:2:3, 4:8:4.
66. This is the general category of suffering. God gave suffering the power to dispel the insensitivity in man, allowing him to become pure and clear; *Derekh HaShem* 2:2:5. *Cf. Berakhoth* 5a; *Zohar* 3:153a.
67. *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:4, 1:5.
68. Rabbenu Yonah, Ralbag, *Metzudoth David*, *ad. loc*; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 2:959; Rabbenu Yonah on *Avoth* 2:3. *Cf. Berakhoth* 55a, Rashi *ad. loc. s.v. Tzerikhim*; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:860, 2:306; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 4:7 end (68a); Maharitz Chayoth, *Megillah* 11a; Radak on Jeremiah 20:23; *Yad*, *Teshuvah* 6:5; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:48.
69. See Malbim on Proverbs 21:1.
70. *Makkoth* 10a; *Shabbath* 104a.

Chapter 4

1. *Pardes Rimonim* 32:2, quoted below, Chapter 11, note 59.
2. Ramchal, *Kinat HaShem* (in *Da'at Tevunot*, volume 2, Bnei Brak 1975) p. 77; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Lekh Lekha* 19a, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 58.
3. *Tanya, Likutey Amarim* 3 (7b); *Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 15 (121a *ff.*). See *Tzafenath Pa'aneach* 49c, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Ekev* 17; *Keter Shem Tov* 391, 413; *Sichot HaRan* 5.
4. *Tanya, ibid.* 123b *ff.*
5. *Cf. Sha'arey Orah* 10; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:20, *s.v. Ratzon*; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:23.
6. See *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 36a.
7. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:4, *Otzar HaShem ad. loc.*; *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 36a, 82b; *Pardes Rimonim* 1:5.
8. Deuteronomy 11:12; Zekhariah 4:10; Psalms 34:16; Proverbs 5:21; 15:3, 22:12. *Cf.* Genesis 6:8, 38:7, 38:10; Leviticus 10:19. See *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:8-12.
9. Numbers 11:1, 11:18; 1 Samuel 8:21.
10. Exodus 9:3; 9:15; Deuteronomy 2:15; Joshua 4:24; Judges 2:15; 1 Samuel 5:6, 5:9, 7:13, 12:15; 2 Kings 3:15; Isaiah 19:16, 25:10, 41:20, 59:1, 66:14; Ezekiel 1:3, 3:22, 37:1, 40:1; Job 12:9; Ruth 1:13.
11. *Mekhilta*, Rashi, on Exodus 19:18; *Tanchuma, Yithro* 13; *Bereshith Rabbah* 27:1; *Koheleth Rabbah* 2:24; *Midrash Tehillim* 1; *Pesikta* 4 (36b); *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:9; *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:26, 1:47; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 2:10; *Chovoth HaLevavoth* 1:10; *Kuzari* 4:3 (18a). *Cf.* Ramban on Genesis 46:1; Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael* 33; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a); *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek HaTakhlit* 26; *Pardes Rimonim* 22:1; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth Yisrael* (1:15b); *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:2, 2:5, note *s.v. VeZehu.*
12. *Berakhoth* 31b; *Sifra* on Leviticus 20:2; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:12; *Chovoth HaLevavoth, loc. cit.*
13. *Yad, loc. cit.*
14. *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:17.
15. *Yad, loc. cit.*; *Thirteen Principles* no.3.
16. Seforno on Genesis 1:26; *Yad, Teshuvah* 5:1; *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:1; *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek HaYichud* 18. *Cf. Bereshith Rabbah* 21:5; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:46.
17. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 2:6.
18. The problem of speaking about what God *is* stems from the fact that we cannot understand God directly, nor can we make any direct statements about His essence. Since we cannot make any direct statements about God, we can only speak of His attributes. These, in turn, are divided into two basic categories: "negative attributes" or what God is not, and "attributes of action" or what God does; *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:58, *Kuzari* 2:2, *Ikkarim* 2:22. Thus, speaking of God's Love, Goodness, Mercy, Justice, etc., involves His "attributes of action." Regarding such "essential attributes" as Will, Knowledge and Ability, see *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 2:1 (44a), *Pardes Rimonim* 4:9, *Derekh HaShem* 1:1:5. See also Chapter 5, note 20.

19. *Sha'arey Orah* 1 (p. 2b); *Avodath HaKodesh*, *Chelek HaTakhlit* 26, 65; *Pardes Rimonim* 22:2; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Beth Neeman* (1:10d); *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:6. *Cf. Zohar* 2:75b, 3:48a, 3:201a, 3:238b, 3:335a, 3:341a (bottom); *Etz Chaim* 26:1 (p. 49). See above, note 2.
20. *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:7. As mentioned, the prophetic experience involved envisioning God's Glory (the *Sefirot* of *Atzilut*) through the dimming influence of the lower universes. Thus, the prophets understood that there could be no vision of God Himself and that His true essence is not included in any image whatsoever; *cf.* Deuteronomy 4:12, 4:15; Isaiah 40:18, 46:5-9; Jeremiah 10:6; Psalms 86:8.
21. *Derekh HaShem*, *ibid. Cf.* R. Bachya on Exodus 24:10.
22. *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 12(116b).
23. Ramchal, *Kinat HaShem*, p. 81. See *Tikuney Zohar* 47 (84a), 69 (116b), 70 (125b); *Zohar* 2:185b, 3:143b; *Pardes Rimonim* 5:5, 8:1, 8:2, 8:10, 8:11.
24. See *Zohar* 2:42b, 3:257b; *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, *Hakdamah* 4 (p. 16).
25. *Zohar* 2:136b; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 12b); *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:2, Moshe Botril, *ad. loc.*; *Pardes Rimonim* 8:2.
26. *Pardes Rimonim* 4; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:67.
27. *Etz Chaim* 1:3 (p. 32), 40:8 (p. 274), 47:1 (p. 356).
28. Ramban on *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:5.
29. *Pardes Rimonim* 4:5-6; *Tanya*, *Likutey Amarim* 3(p. 6b).
30. *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a).
31. An alternate term for the *Sefirah* of *Chesed* is *Gedulah*, which means literally "greatness." Both terms imply a quality of total benevolence or expansion beyond all confines. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 1:8, 23:3. See Chapter 7, note 3.
32. *Gevurah* is usually translated as "power," "strength" or "might," but here we have kept closer to its Kabbalistic meaning. The sages also understood the concept of *Gevurah* as one of "holding back" when they asked "Who is *gibor*-strong? One who *restrains* his urge" (Avoth 4:1).
33. *Netzach* has also been translated as "victory," from the verb *LaMenatzeach*, meaning "to overcome," or "eternity" from 1 Samuel 15:29, Psalms 9:19, 13:2, 16:11; see Chapter 8, note 8.
34. *Hod* is usually translated as "splendor" or "majesty," but its essential quality is actually that of submission and awe in the face of something that exhibits splendor and majesty. We have rendered it "empathy" because it denotes the ability to submit to the needs of another.
35. *Netzach* and *Hod* are also associated with the kidneys and the two testicles; *cf. Zohar* 3:296a; *Pardes Rimonim* 8:24. See Chapter 8, notes 34, 41.
36. An ancient term for *Yesod* is *Koll* (All) because the sexual organ represents the channel through which illumination flows from all the upper *Sefirot* to *Malkhut*; *cf.* 1 Chronicles, 29:11; *Bahir* 22, 78; *Zohar* 1:31a, 2:116a, 3:257a; *Sha'arey Orah* 2 (p. 29a); *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Inyan Sefirat HaOmer*, *Drush* no.10 (p. 179). See Part II, note 198.
37. Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael* 1, 2, 17, 40. *Cf. Sefer Yetzirah* 4:3.
38. *Zohar Chadash*, *Toledoth* 26c; *cf. Zohar* 2:256a.
39. *Mesekhta Atzilut* 14.
40. The word *Keter* is thus etymologically related to the concept of "encircling;" *cf.* Judges 20:43, Psalms 22:13. See also *Sifra DeTzeniuta* in *Zohar* 2:176b *ff.*;

Etz Chaim 25:5 (p. 35), where *Keter* is frequently referred to as *Gulgoltha*, "skull" or "cranium."

41. This is based on the verse "The beginning is wisdom" (Psalms 111:10, Proverbs 4:7). *Cf.* Proverbs 8:22; *Bahir* 49, 103, 142; *Targum Yerushalmi* on Genesis 1:1; *Zohar* 1:145a.
42. *Sha'arey Orah* 10; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:20, *s.v. Ratzon*; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:23.
43. *Lekha Dodi*. See Chapter 3, note 6.
44. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7.
45. *Cf.* Proverbs 16:21, 18:15, 19:21 where the faculty of *Binah*-Understanding is associated with the heart. See, however, *Etz Chaim* 25:5 (p. 35) where the Ari explains how *Binah* is associated with both the heart and the head.
46. *Etz Chaim* 22:1 (p. 309); *Mevo Shearim* 5:1:14 (p. 220). See Chapter 5, note 19.
47. *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 3 (8b); *Tanchuma, Pekudey* 2; *Zohar* 2:162b.
48. See *Etz Chaim* 23:5, 23:8, 25:6, 46:5; *Nahar Shalom, Drush HaDa'at* (in *Etz Chaim*, volume 3), p. 170*ff.*; HaGra in *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1 (p. 3a). See Chapter 5, note 15.
49. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:5.
50. HaGra *ad. loc.* See *Kehilat Yaacov, Erekh Ain-Vav, s.v. Omek*. Also see *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 15a, b.).

Chapter 5

1. *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 299).
2. *Ibid.* See also *Etz Chaim* 7:3 (p. 97).
3. This relationship between *Keter* and *Malkhut* is all the more significant in view of the Kabbalistic rule that the *Malkhut* of a higher universe becomes the *Keter* of a lower one; *Etz Chaim, ibid.*
4. *Sha'arey Orah* 9 (p. 93a).
5. *Pardes Rimonim* 23:1. See *Sotah* 21b; *Zohar* 1:156b, 2:221a, 3:290b.
6. See Chapter 4, note 18.
7. *Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 20 (p. 129b); *cf. Zohar* 1:11b.
8. *Bahir* 141; *Zohar* 2:14b, 2:43a, 3:11b; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 10b), 21 (p. 62a). *Cf. Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:12.
9. *Rosh HaShanah* 32a; *Megillah* 21b. *Cf. Avoth* 5:1; *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 31:2; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 3 (8b), Radal *ad. loc.* 3:73; *Bereshith Rabbah* 17:1; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:22.
10. *Bereshith Rabbah* 17:1; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:22.
11. *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 12; *Likutey Halakhoth, Rosh HaShanah* 6:12.
12. Rambam, *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 1:6; *Sefer HaMitzvot*, positive commandment no.1; *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, positive no.1; *Zohar* 2:25a, 3:256b. See also Josephus, *Antiquities* 3:5:5, who seems to concur with this opinion.
13. Ramban on *Sefer HaMitzvot, loc. cit.*, based on *Halakhoth Gedoloth*. See *Sefer HaMitzvot* of R. Saadia Gaon, who also omits it.

14. *Etz Chaim* 25:5 (p. 36).
15. *Etz Chaim* 23:5 (p. 324), 23:8 (p. 328 *ff.*), 25:6 (p. 39 *ff.*), 46:5 (p. 354); *Nahar Shalom*, *Drush HaDa'at* (in *Etz Chaim*, volume 3), p. 170 *ff.*
16. *Etz Chaim* 23:8 (p. 328*f.*); HaGra on *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:1 (p. 3a).
17. *Chagigah* 2b.
18. *Ibid.*; *Yad*, *Ishut* 2:26, *Gerushin* 2:16, *Mekhirah 29:3; Shulchan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 121:6, *Choshen Mishpath* 235:18.
19. It is for this reason that *Da'at*-Knowledge generally refers to the concept of connection and intimate attachment, as in "Adam knew (*yada*) his wife Eve"(Genesis 4:1). Adam and Eve are thus the paradigm of two people becoming as intimately bound to each other as possible, i. e. of completely knowing someone else; *cf. Tikuney Zohar* 69 (p. 99a); Rashi, Genesis 18:19; *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 15 (p. 123b).

    Kabbalistically, this ability of *Da'at* to bind and attach seems to be a function of its position among the *Sefirot*. Unlike *Keter* (crown, cranium) which is above *Chokhmah* and *Binah* (right and left hemispheres of the brain), *Da'at* (middle brain, cerebral cortex) is situated between and below these two *Sefirot*. *Da'at* is therefore said to be the interface between *Chokhmah* and *Binah* and denotes their combination and interaction; *Tikuney Zohar*, *ibid.*; *Pardes Rimonim* 3:8; *Tanya*, ibid.

    Da'at also represents the "connector" between the Mentalities and the Attributes. It is through *Da'at* that the Mentalities are revealed and externalized in the Attributes; *Etz Chaim* 22:1 (p. 309); *Mevo Shearim* 5:1:14 (p. 220).

    Finally, it is through *Da'at* that an entire unit of *Sefirot* is externalized, revealed and attached to another unit of *Sefirot*. Thus, according to the Ari, when *Da'at* is included in the ten *Sefirot*, it alludes to the external bond between one complete unit of *Sefirot* and another. Again, this is alluded to in the *eleventh* saying of Genesis, "God said, it is not good for man to be alone," which corresponds to *Da'at*. When, however, *Keter* is manifest to the exclusion of *Da'at*, it alludes to the essential-internal or hidden-infinite aspect of the ten *Sefirot*. This implies that at the level of *Keter*-Crown finite existence interfaces or effaces into infinity. The level of *Da'at*-Knowledge, on the other hand, implies the limitation and finiteness of a knower, a known and a knowing. Since, logically, infinity precludes the possibility of finitude, this gives rise to a number of important paradoxes with regard to our understanding of God; *cf. Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 2:10.
20. See Chapter 4, note 18. The fact that we perceive God by means of two types of attributes — negative attributes and attributes of action — actually causes us to see Him with a sort of double vision. It is very much like looking at a single object through two different lenses — there may be only one object, but we might see two distinct and very different images. In a similar manner, the two categories of attributes are like two lenses through which we peer at God. A good analogy would be the wave-particle duality of our perception of the fundamental particles of matter. In many cases the two images converge and there is no problem. Indeed, as the *Ikkarim* (2:24) points out, there are a number of attributes that come under both categories simultaneously. Nevertheless, there are a number of important instances where the two images do not converge and this is responsible

for the paradoxes that we encounter when we speak about God. These paradoxes are built into the system as a result of our double incomplete vision. See Chapter 13, note 14.

21. *Keter* (God's Will), *Chokhmah* (Mind), *Binah* (Logic) and *Da'at* (Knowledge) are thus all creations of God. To say otherwise would be to imply that these basic concepts are coequal with God, which is impossible. Specifically, God was not constrained to create the world with the logic that it now has. If He were, then He would be subservient to logic, which, again, is unthinkable; *cf. Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 30 (22b). Therefore, if the universe seems logical to us, it is because God endowed us with the same logic that He used in creation. With respect to God, however, this was a voluntary act and not something intrinsic or necessary; *Likutey Moharan* 52. This is not to say that the actual rules of logic are arbitrary, but rather that God Himself transcends these very rules. Thus, for example when His overall plan necessitates it, God overrides the laws of nature because these laws are part of the system of logic that He Himself created.
22. *Sha'arey Orah* 10 (p. 99b); *cf. Shemoth Rabbah* 3:6. For the Divine Name associated with each of the *Sefirot*, see *Zohar* 3:10b, 3:11a, 3:11b.
23. *Ehyeh* thus denotes the very first thought and impulse of Will that initiated the creative process. Hence it is "I will be," since at the time of that impulse, everything was in the future. It is the level where being has not yet begun, when one is in a state of pregnancy and can only say "I will be," and not "I am." This name was therefore revealed at the Burning Bush because the Exodus represented the birth of Israel; *Kedushath Levi*, *Shemoth* (p. 94); *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefillin* 5:26; *Likutey Moharan* 6.
24. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 3:8; *Etz Chaim* 23:7 (p. 327), 23:8 (p. 328 *ff.*).
25. *Cf. Mekhilta* on Exodus 14:29; *Bereshith Rabbah* 21:5; Shir *HaShirim Rabbah* 1:46; *Yad*, *Teshuvah* 5:1.
26. This is the well known paradox involving God's knowledge of the future and man's free will. See *Yad*, *Teshuvah* 5:5; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:20; *Shemonah Perakim* 8; Rambam, commentary on *Avoth* 3:15; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 4:4 (65b); *Kuzari* 5:20 (47b); *Chovoth HaLevavoth* 3:8; *Milchamoth HaShem* 3:106; *Or HaShem* 2:4; *Ikkarim* 4:3, 4:7-10; *Akedath Yitzchak* 2(151a); *Beth Elokim* 3:41; *Teshuvoth Rivash* 119; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Beth HaBechirah* (1:43a); *Pardes Rimonim* 4:9; Maharal, *Gevuroth HaShem* 2; R. Bachya on Exodus 15:18. *Cf.* Tosafot, *Niddah 16b, s. v. HaKoll*; *Midrash Shmuel*, *Tosafot Yom Tov*, on *Avoth* 3:15; *Likutey Moharan* 21:4-5. See Chapter 2, note 30.
27. *Makkoth* 10b. See Chapter 3, note 64.
28. *Sha'arey Orah* 10 (p. 99b).
29. *Derekh HaShem* 2:8:1.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.* See *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 13.
32. *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 72; *Sichot HaRan* 3.
33. *Yerushalmi*, *Peah* 1:1 (5a); *Yerushalmi*, *Sanhedrin* 10:1 (49a); *Zohar* 2:106a; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 5:6; *Yad*, *Teshuvah* 3:14.
34. *Midrash Tehillim* 90; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 3 (6b).
35. *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tzitzith* 5:8. *Cf. Zohar* 3:228a.
36. *Cf.* Rashi on Exodus 34:6.

37. *Yoma* 86b. *Cf. Berakhoth* 34b.
38. *Rosh HaShanah* 17a; Rashi *ad. loc. s.v. HaMa'avir*; *Derekh HaShem* 4:8:4; *Sichot HaRan* 89.
39. See *Etz Chaim* 13:9 (p. 193); *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan VaYaavor* 3 (p. 286); *Zohar* 2:4b, 3:131b. Also see *Targum Onkelos*, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban, Baaley Tosafot, Seforno *ad. loc.*; *Yoma* 36b; *Yoma* 88a; Tosafot, *Rosh HaShanah* 17b, *s.v. Shalosh*; *Sefer Chasidim* 250; *Makor Chesed ad. loc.* 250:3. These Thirteen Attributes are also alluded to in Micah 7:18-20; see *Zohar* 3:131b; *Etz Chaim loc. cit.*; *Tomer Devorah* (Ramak) 1.

Chapter 6

1. *Chokhmah* is undifferentiated. It is only through the power of *Binah* that it is divided into separate manifestations. An example would be water flowing through a system of pipes. Water itself is an undifferentiated fluid, having no essential macroscopic structure. Structure is only imposed on it when it flows through the system of pipes. In the analogy, *Chokhmah* is the water and *Binah* represents the pipes that channel it; *cf. Derekh Mitzvotekha* (*Chabad*) 2 (p. 5b).
2. See Chapter 4, note 47.
3. Rashi, *loc. cit.*
4. *Sanhedrin* 93b.
5. Ibn Ezra on Exodus 31:3; Hirsch on Genesis 41:33.
6. *Zohar* 3:28a, 3:34a, 3:235b; *Tikuney Zohar* 65 (p. 96a), 69 (102b); *Pardes Rimonim* 23:8; *Tanya* 3 (p. 7b).
7. *Chokhmah* is thus associated with the nonverbal right hemisphere of the brain, while *Binah* is associated with the verbal left hemisphere. As the Kabbalists explain, *Chokhmah* is normally only experienced when it is clothed in *Binah*. One may be able to experience the workings of the nonverbal areas of the mind, but only when they are clothed in verbal, descriptive thoughts. The *Sefer Yetzirah* (1:4) speaks of a deliberate oscillation between *Chokhmah* and *Binah* when it says, "Understand with wisdom and be wise with understanding."
8. *Avoth* 4:1. *Cf. Sha'ar Ma'amarey Chazal* p. 32a, 68a.
9. *Zohar* 3:43a; *Etz Chaim* 25:1 (p. 8); *Tanya* 18 (p. 23b).
10. *Zohar, ibid.*; *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Kavanat Yotzer* (p. 118); *Tanya, ibid.*
11. In the Kabbalah, *Chokhmah* is seen as the Father (*Abba*), while *Binah* is the Mother (*Ima*). The male represents unchanneled creative force. This can ony be brought to fruition when delineated, enclosed and channeled by the female womb. See Chapter 11.
12. *Etz Chaim* 48:2 (p. 371); *Tanya* 3 (7b).
13. Psychologically, memory is not verbal, but is stored in the mind in a nonverbal mode. It is only when one brings a memory to the surface that it becomes verbalized.
14. The future cannot be imagined and conceived except in verbal and descriptive

terms. The main way we know the future is thus by extrapolating from our knowledge of the past, thereby "piercing" into the future.

15. There are a number of reasons why these two letters represent *Chokhmah* and *Binah* respectively. *Yod* has the primary form of a simple point. This alludes to *Chokhmah* being simple and undifferentiated. *Heh* has a numerical value of five, alluding to the five fingers of the hand. As such, it represents *Binah*, the hand that holds *Chokhmah*, distributing and channeling it. See Chapter 2, note 18.
16. *Heh* is one of the two letters in the Hebrew alphabet that is written as two disjunct parts. This alludes to the fact that *Binah* represents the beginning of separation (*perud*); see Chapter 3, note 22.

Chapter 7

1. *Bereshith Rabbah* 96:5; Genesis 47:20, Rashi *ad. loc.*
2. Genesis 1:3. See *Chagigah* 12a; *Bahir* 13, 25, 147, 190; *Zohar* 2:127b; Recanati on Genesis 1:3 (p. 4a); *Pardes Rimonim* 2:4.
3. Rambam, *Avoth* 5:7; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:53; *Pardes Rimonim* 8:2; *Etz Chaim* 18:5 (p. 263); *Mevo Shearim* 1:1:1 (p. 2); *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 15 (p. 121b). *Cf. Zohar* 2:168b.
4. *Zohar* 2:127b.
5. *Avoth* 4:1; *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 23:1. *Cf.* Proverbs 16:32. See Chapter 4, note 32.
6. *Pardes Rimonim*, *ibid.*; *Etz Chaim*, *ibid.*
7. *Cf.* 1 Chronicles 29:11. See Chapter 4, note 31.
8. *Mevo Shearim* 1:1:1. See Chapter 2, note 22.
9. *Cf. Zohar* 1:77b; *Sotah* 47a.
10. *Zohar Chadash*, *Toledoth* 26c. See Chapter 4, note 38.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Zohar* 2:51b, 2:175; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17b).
13. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:53. *Cf. Sanhedrin* 6b, 2 Samuel 8:15; *Zohar* 2:257a.
14. *Zohar* 3:248b; *Tikuney Zohar* 70 (p. 133b); *Pardes Rimonim* 10:1. See *Avoth* 2:1.
15. Hirsch, Malbim, on Genesis 1:11-13.
16. Genesis 26:18.
17. Genesis 26:7.
18. Genesis 20:2
19. Genesis 29:11
20. *Berakhoth* 28a. *Cf. Zohar* 3:230a; *Chovoth HaLevavoth*, Introduction, on Deuteronomy 18:13; *Yevamoth* 63a.

Chapter 8

1. *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a). Quoted above, Chapter 4, note 30.
2. *Sha'arey Orah* 3 (p. 34b).
3. *Pesachim* 112a.
4. *Cf.* Proverbs 10:25; *Zohar* 1:148b, 3:242a, on Psalm 123:9; *Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 33. See below, note 19.
5. *Ohev Yisrael, VaEthChanan* 80c; *Kedushath Levi, Ekev* p. 256; *cf. Zohar* 3:7b; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:418; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:9.
6. *Zohar* 1:31a, 2:116a, 3:257a; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 9b); *Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 15 (p. 122b).
7. Thus, it is the attribute of *Yesod* that allows man to have more delight in serving God than in any other enjoyment; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Lekh Lekha* 19a, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 58.
8. Radak, *Sefer Sherashim, s.v. Netzach.* See *Bahir* 169, 170; *Sha'arey Orah* 4 (p. 39a, bottom).
9. See below, notes 43 and 44.
10. *Ben Porath Yosef, Noach* 19d, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Noach* 2; *Keter Shem Tov* 16; *Torath HaMagid, Hanhagoth* (p. 14).
11. *Sha'ar HaMitzvot, Lekh Lekha* (p. 19). See below, note 16.
12. Genesis 29:20
13. Genesis 29:30
14. Part of Benjamin's territory ran like a strip through the respective portions of Judah and Joseph; *cf.* Joshua 18:11-13. It was on this strip that both Temples were later built. Moreover, based on Genesis 45:14, Talmudic tradition (*Megillah* 16b) states that before the first Temple was built in the portion of Benjamin, the Sanctuary (*Mishkan*) had been located in Shiloh, in Joseph's (Ephraim's) territory. For the extremely close relationship that existed between Joseph and Benjamin, see *Sotah* 36b.
15. *Yoma* 54a, *Tosafot Yeshenim ad. loc., s. v. U'Marin*; Ritba, *ad. loc.*
16. *Zohar* 1:194b, 3:14a top. *Cf. Yoma* 35b; *Sotah* 36b. In general, a person is only called a *Tzadik* when he or she can control their sexual passions; *Zohar* 1:59b, *Nitzutzey Or ad. loc.* 5 and 6.
17. *Sotah* 36b.
18. *Kiddushin* 30b; *Niddah* 31a; *Koheleth Rabbah* 5:13. *Cf. Zohar* 2:93a; 3:83a; 3:219b.
19. Proverbs 10:25; *Zohar* 1:208a, b.
20. See Chapter 3, note 2.
21. *Zohar* 1:59b (top).
22. *Zohar* 1:193b (bottom), 3:255b (bottom), *s. v. Lulav*; *Sha'arey Orah* 2 (p. 19a). *Cf. Bahir* 74; *Zohar* 2:166b; *Pardes Rimonim* 5:26; *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby* (p. 23).
23. *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 1:7; *Vayikra Rabbah* 29:1.
24. *Tikuney Zohar* 69 (p. 99b); *Etz Chaim* 49:2 (p. 381), 49:6 (p. 388); *Sha'ar HaMitzvot, Lekh Lekha* (p. 20). Evil is here defined as a force that prevents the proper union of *Yesod* and *Malkhut*.
25. *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 2:5; *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Tanchuma, Noach* 5; *Tikuney Zohar* 69 (99b). See also *Ma'aseh HaShem, Ma'aseh Bereshith* 19 (p. 58c), *Ma'aseh Avoth* 14 (p. 90c).

26. See Part II, "The Mitzvah of Circumcision."
27. See above, note 24.
28. *Cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 3:49.
29. *Cf. Zohar* 3:15b; Rashi, *Megillah* 31a, *s. v. Korin*; *Turey Zahav*, *Orach Chaim* 622:4.
30. *Berakhoth* 17a.
31. *Likutey Moharan* 21:4. See Chapter 2, notes 45, 46.
32. *Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh Deah* 264:3-5.
33. Rambam, *Isurey Biah* 1:10; *cf. Sanhedrin* 73b; *Yevamoth* 55b; Tosafot, *Kiddushin* 10a, *s.v. Koll.*
34. *Tikuney Zohar* 48 (p. 85a); *cf. Zohar* 3: 296a.
35. *Zohar* 3:35a, 3:53b; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 2a), 70 (p. 123b), *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby* (p. 3).
36. Genesis 15:12; Daniel 10:8. Rambam on *Sanhedrin* 10:1; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:2; *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6, 3:5:3.
37. *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:1-2.
38. *Ibid.* 3:5:4. See Part II, "The Dream Center."
39. *Zohar* 1:21b, 1:146a, 1:166a.
40. *Likutim Yekarim* 199.
41. This does not contradict the fact that the ultimate source of constriction is in *Binah* and *Gevurah*, since in the array of the *Sefirot*, *Hod* is an offshoot of *Gevurah* and *Gevurah* itself is an offshoot of *Binah*.
42. See note 34.
43. See Part II, note 206.
44. *Etz Chaim* 35:5 (p. 182*f.*).
45. *Zohar* 2:191a, 2:192a.
46. Genesis 32:26; *cf. Zohar Chadash* 154a.
47. *Zohar* 3:243a; *cf. Bereshith Rabbah* 78:6; *Chulin* 91a; *Pardes Rimonim* 17; *Etz Chaim* 35:5 (p. 183); *Sha'ar Ma'amrey Rashby*, p. 62.
48. *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:42. *Divrey Shalom* on Genesis 32:26 writes that this occurred while Jacob was in a meditative state. It is thus taught that the dust from their wrestling reached the Throne of Glory, indicating that this involved a very high spiritual level; *Chulin* 91a; Rashba (in *Ain Yaacov*) *ad. loc.*
49. *Bereshith Rabbah* 77:3; *Zohar* 1:170b; Ramban on Genesis 32:26; *Sefer HaChinukh* 3.
50. R. Bachya on Genesis 32:25. *Cf. Shemoth Rabbah* 36:1; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 2:289; Rashi on Isaiah 42:1; *Menachoth* 53b.
51. *Sefer HaYashar* 1.
52. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 2. See Chapter 10, note 47.
53. *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth HaBechirah* (p. 44b) *s.v. VeAta.*
54. *Bereshith Rabbah* 12:5; *cf. ibid.* 11:8.

Chapter 9

1. *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 15 (p. 122a *ff.*); *Likutey Torah*, *Masai* 90c.
2. R. Yitzchak Ashlag, *Hakdamah LaSefer HaZohar* (in *Sulam*), no.10 (p. 5); *Idem.*, *Petichah LeChokhmat HaKabbalah* no.5 (p. 2).
3. *Zohar* 1:238a, 1:249a, b; *cf. Likutey Moharan* 1.
4. *Pardes Rimonim* 8:2.
5. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:5. See Chapter 4, notes 49 and 50.
6. *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 21:5.
7. *Cf. Derekh HaShem* 4:7:2.
8. *Zohar* 3:258a; *Tikuney Zohar* 69 (p. 105b, top); HaGra on *Sefer Yetzirah* 4:4. See Chapter 11, note 89.
9. *Cf.* Maharal, *Netivot Olam*, *Netiv HaTorah* (p. 3).
10. *Cf. Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefillin* 5:1; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Even HaEzer*, *P'ru U'Rvu* 3:10.
11. *Cf. Pardes Rimonim*, *ibid.*
12. See 1 Kings 2; *Oneg Shabbath*, p. 31.
13. *Cf. Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a). See Chapter 4, note 30; Chapter 11, note 79.
14. *Berakhoth* 3b.
15. With slight variations these are: 1. *Nitzuach* (נצוח), 2. *Nigun* (נגון), 3. *Maskil* (משכיל), 4. *Mikhtam* (מכתם), 5. *Mizmor* (מזמור), 6. *Shir* (שיר), 7. *Ashrey* (אשרי), 8. *Tefillah* (תפילה), 9. *Hoda'ah* (הודאה), 10. *Halleluyah* (הללויה); *Zohar* 3:101a, 3:22b; *Tikuney Zohar* 13 (p. 27a *ff.*); *Pesachim* 117a; *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 92. See Chapter 12, note 50.

Chapter 10

1. *Etz Chaim* 6:1 (p. 75).
2. See *Etz Chaim* 11:1 (p. 144*f.*).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 145; *Mevo Shearim* 2:1:1 (p. 8).
4. *Etz Chaim* 8:2 (p. 107).
5. *Etz Chaim* 11:5 (p. 152), 19:3 (p. 271); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:1 (p. 28).
6. *Etz Chaim* 10:3 (p. 140 top), 11:5 (p. 150).
7. *Etz Chaim* 19:1 (p. 267, bottom), 19:3 (p. 271).
8. This kind of model can be misleading in the sense that we are speaking about three explicit stages in the formation of the *Sefirot*. The truth is that we are dealing on a level above time; *cf. Etz Chaim* 1:1 (p. 25); *Nahar Shalom* (in *Etz Chaim*, volume 3) p. 22; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:17 end. This process is actually taking place in a conceptual or logical time dimension. By analogy, if you prove a geometrical theorem, you go from step 1 to step 2 to step 3. The proof is thus unfolding in time. Yet, it is totally independent of time. The same is true of these Kabbalistic processes. Because our minds are time oriented, we see them unfolding in time. Actually, they proceed in a logical sequence that is totally independent of time.

9. *Etz Chaim* 6:1 (p. 74*f.*), 6:3 (p. 78*f.*).
10. Our discussion of the *Sefirot* in the preceding chapters has been exclusively in terms of their reconstituted state in *Atzilut* (*Berudim*) as perfected Vessels. It is only in this state that they act as a unified system for receiving God's light and transmitting it to man.
11. *Mevo Shearim* 2:1:1 (p. 8).
12. Rashi on Genesis 1:2.
13. *Bereshith Rabbah* 3:7, 9:2; *Shemoth Rabbah* 30:3; *cf. Noam Elimelekh, Bo* 36b.
14. Esau was born with a ruddy complexion and was therefore called "Red" (*Edom*); Genesis 25:25, 25:30. See *Zohar* 3:135a.
15. See, however, 1 Chronicles 1:43-51, where Hadar's name is changed to Hadad and his death *is* mentioned.
16. Hadar is thus counted among the kings that died on the one hand, while on the other, because he is married, he is part of the rectification process; *Zohar* 3:135b; *Etz Chaim* 10:3 (p. 140); 8:3 (p. 111); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:1 (p. 24), 2:3:2 (p. 63).
17. *Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaKellalim* 1 (p. 2), 8:4 (p. 113); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:8 (p. 51).
18. *Etz Chaim* 8:4 (p. 113).
19. See above, note 10.
20. See *Zohar* 3:135a; *Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaKellalim* 1 (p.2), 8:4 (p. 113), 9:1 (p. 118).
21. *Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaKellalim* 1 (p. 2 end), 9:2 (p. 120); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:2 (p. 28).
22. *Etz Chaim* 9:3 (p. 124), *s.v. V'Nevaer*; *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:5 (p. 37).
23. *Etz Chaim* 19:3 (p. 271).
24. *Etz Chaim* 4:3 (p. 58 top).
25. *Bahir* 2.
26. See Raavad, Introduction to *Sefer Yetzirah.*
27. See Radak, *Sefer Sherashim, s.v. Bohu.*
28. *Mevo Shearim* 2:1:1 (p. 8); *Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri), *Bereshith* p. 8.
29. *Cf.* Genesis 22:17, Ezekiel 30:18; Radak, *Sefer Sherashim, s.v. Chosekh.*
30. *Etz Chaim* 18:1 (p. 255); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:9 (p. 54 top); *Sefer HaLikutim, Bereshith*, pp. 8-9.
31. *Zohar* 3:135b.
32. *Etz Chaim* 9:2 (p. 121); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:3 (p. 32); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot* p. 102 top.
33. *Zohar* 3:169a, 3:170a; *Etz Chaim* 18:1 (p. 254), 22:2 (p. 311); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot, ibid.*; *Kellalim Rishonim* (Ramchal) 17.
34. The *Midrash* alludes to this when it speaks of the bone called *Luz* (לוז) in man, which is never destroyed. It is from this bone that man is rebuilt and restored in the Resurrection; *Bereshith Rabbah* 28:3; *Vayikra Rabbah* 18:1; Tosafot, *Bava Kama* 16b, *s.v. VeHu*; *Zohar* 1:69b; Rashi on Ecclesiastes 12:5. This is identified with the "scoop of dust" (*Tarvad shel Rakav*), the final decay product of the body, mentioned in *Nazir* 7:2 (49b); see *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 34; *Zohar* 1:113a; *Avodath HaKodesh* 2:40.
35. *Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaKellalim* 1 (p. 2); *Ben Porath Yosef* 74b, quoted in

Sefer Baal Shem Tov, *Miketz* 1; *Keter Shem Tov* 53; *Tzava'ath HaRivash* p. 231. *Cf. Zohar* 1:4a, 3:47b; *Tanya 36 (45b).*

36. *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tolaim* 4:3. See note 30.
37. See *Etz Chaim* 19:2 (p. 269); *Niddah* 38b.
38. Basically, this does not take place until the vessels shatter and fall into what will become *Beriyah*. It is then that the *Klipot* are created from the fragments of the vessels and nourished by the sparks in them; *Etz Chaim* 49:3 (pp. 382-384). See, however, *Etz Chaim* 48:1 (p. 370).
39. *Zohar* 2:163a; *Ben Porath Yosef* 107d, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 148.
40. *Cf. Toledoth Yaacov Yosef*, *VaYakhel* 75b, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 141. See also, *Toledoth*, *Bereshith* 8c, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *VaYelekh* 7, *Keter Shem Tov* 85, *Ben Porath Yosef* 111a.
41. *Etz Chaim*, *Sha'ar HaKellalim* 2 (p. 4 top), 11:5 (p. 150 bottom).
42. *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:5-6. See also Chapter 8, note 5.
43. *Cf. Midrash Tehillim* 36:4; *Zohar* 1:23a, 2:184a; *Akedath Yitzchak* 70 (3:145b); *Etz Chaim* 11:5 (p. 150); *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Shemoth* 9.
44. *Chulin* 60b; *cf. Zohar* 3:47b.
45. *Zohar* 1:35a, 1:82b; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:77; *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:6. *Cf. Yoma* 39a; Rashi on Song of Songs 7:2 (end); *Berakhoth* 6a; *Noam Elimelekh*, *Likutey Shoshanim* 103d; *Ohev Yisrael*, *Yithro* 36b.
46. *Etz Chaim* 8:6 (p. 116).
47. *Etz Chaim*, *Sha'ar HaKellalim* 2 (p. 4), 11:2 (p. 146), 11:5 (p. 150*f.*), 36:2 (p. 197). *Cf. Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 2, 47; *Kellalim Rishonim* 18.
48. *Etz Chaim* 8:4 (p. 112*f.*), 11:2 (p. 146*f.*), 48:1 (p. 370).
49. See *Etz Chaim* 9:2 (p. 120); 48:1 (p. 370); 49:3 (p. 383*ff.*)
50. *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Drush Tefilat HaShachar* p. 87*ff.*; *cf. Etz Chaim* 49:8 (p. 390*f.*).
51. *Shabbath* 89a; *cf. Likutey Halakhoth*, *Gerim* 3:16. See note 61.
52. *Cf.* Numbers 17:11; *Zohar* 1:100b, 2:224a.
53. *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *ibid.* p. 89 top.
54. *Kerithoth* 6b; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Kriat Shema* 2 (p. 156).
55. See above, note 17.
56. See Part II, note 218.
57. *Ben Porath Yosef* 127a, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 147; *Keter Shem Tov* 78. *Cf. Toledoth Yaacov Yosef*, *Matoth* 173c.
58. *Shabbath* 75a.
59. *Tamid* 7:4 (33b). *Cf. Tikuney Zohar* 9 (24b), 28 (72b); *Keter Shem Tov* 348, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 2; *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 39; *Kedushath Levi*, *Ki Thisa* p. 162.
60. *Succah* 52a.
61. Tosafot, *Shabbath* 75a, *s.v. HaShochet.*
62. *Bava Bathra* 16a.
63. Exodus 20:9-11.
64. *Bereshith Rabbah* 19:4; Rashi on Genesis 3:5.
65. Genesis 3:5.
66. *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 1:7; *Sotah* 9b; *Bereshith Rabbah* 19:1, 20:5.
67. Rashi on Genesis 3:1; *Bereshith Rabbah* 20:5; Maharsha on *Sotah* 9b.
68. *Zohar* 1:35b; *Bahir* 200; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 13; *Etz Chaim* 49:2 (p.384),

49:8 (p.390); Alshekh on Genesis 3:7; *Ben Ish Chai*, introduction to *Bereshith*.
69. *Sefer Chasidim* 530.
70. *Cf. Shabbath* 89a; *Bereshith Rabbah* 48:11; *Sefer Chasidim, ibid.*
71. See *Ben Porath Yosef* 107d, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 148.
72. *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:6, note *s.v. VeHaInyan* (6a).
73. *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:2; *Mikhtav M'Eliahu volume* 2, p. 138.
74. *Cf. Etz Chaim* 49:4 (p. 386).
75. Genesis 4:13.
76. *Yalkuth Shimoni* 2:843; *cf. Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 21.
77. *Ibid.*
78. From Numbers 5:7-8. See *Yad, Teshuvah* 1:1. *Sefer HaMitzvot*, positive commandment no.73; *Sefer HaChinukh* 364. *Cf. Yoma* 86b on Exodus 32:31.
79. *Tzava'ath HaRivash*, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith 167; cf. Magid Devarav LeYaacov, Likutim Chadashim, Teshuvah* 2-3 (p. 148). See *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Rosh HaShanah, s.v. VeNoda* p. 210.
80. *Yad, Teshuvah* 7:4. See *Etz Chaim* 49:8 (p. 390).
81. *Yerushalmi, Peah* 1:1 (5a); *Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin* 10:1 (49a); *Zohar* 2:106a; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 5:6; *Yad, Teshuvah* 3:14. See Chapter 5, note 33.
82. *Keter Shem Tov* 401, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 82; *Likutim Yekarim* 29a; *Kedushath Levi, Bereshith* p. 5. Superficially, creation is characterized by the concept of plurality. The six days of the week thus parallel the diffuse nature of the six *Sefirot* from *Chesed* to *Yesod*. It is only on the Sabbath that the essential unity of creation is realized. This is when creation is unified with God. The Sabbath is thus called the "mystery of Unity," when all creation returns to its Source; *Zohar* 2:135a.
83. See Genesis 1:27-28.
84. See *Shabbath* 151b; *Yad, Teshuvah* 2:1.
85. *Eruvin* 18b; *cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 1:7; *Sanhedrin* 109a; *Torah Temimah* on Genesis 5:3.
86. *Sha'ar HaPesukim, Shemoth p. 102; Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Pesach*, p. 136*ff.*
87. *Kuzari* 1:47, 1:95.
88. *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 2:5. See Chapter 8, note 25.
89. According to the Kabbalists, the birth of Cain and Abel paralleled the Universe of *Tohu*, while Seth paralleled the Universe of *Tikkun*; *Etz Chaim* 19:7 (p. 277); *Kehilat Yaacov, Erekh Shin-Tav, s.v. Seth ben Adam.*

Chapter 11

1. *Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaKellalim* 2 (p. 3*f.*).
2. *Ibid.* 1 (p. 1), 42:1 (p. 299). For the significance of this number, see *Beth Elokim, Sha'ar HaYesodoth* 32 (95b). *Cf. Zohar* 3:228a; *Baal HaTurim* on Numbers 15:38-39.
3. *Etz Chaim* 11:7 (p. 158*f.*).
4. *Ibid.* 10:1 (p. 137); *Mevo Shearim* 2:3:9 (p. 87).

5. *Zohar* 3:10a, 3:135b, 3:136b, 3:141a, 3:290; *Etz Chaim* 10:3 (p. 140). See Chapter 10, note 16.
6. *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:1 (p. 25); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 2; *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, p. 74. *Cf. Ohaloth* 1:8; *Zohar* 2:228b. See below, note 76.
7. *Zohar* 2:176a-179a.
8. *Zohar* 3:127b-145a.
9. *Zohar* 3:287b-296b.
10. *Zohar* 3:290a,b. See *Zohar* 2:178b, 3:10b, 3:11b, 3:128b (top), 3:142a; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:15, *s.v. Saba*; *Kehilat Yaacov*, *Erekh Beth-Tav*, *s.v. Bath*.
11. *Cf. Tikuney Zohar* 22 (p. 65a); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 4.
12. See *Etz Chaim* 17:1 (p. 247*ff.*), 22:1 (p. 308*f.*); *Kellalim Rishonim* (Ramchal) 23.
13. *Zohar* 3:141a.
14. *Pardes Rimonim* 2:6; *Shefa Tal*, end of 2; *Etz Chaim* 42:14 (pp. 314-315). See Chapter 3, note 1.
15. See Chapter 1, note 44.
16. *Cf. Zohar* 3:33b; *Tikuney Zohar* 69 (100b); *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:72; *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 58, *VaYishlach* 7. See Chapter 4, notes 2 and 19.
17. *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, p. 142.
18. It is important to realize that this verse could not have been stated before the Universe of *Tikkun* was completed. In the Universe of *Tohu* the *Sefirot* are merely abstract ideas, incapable of functioning in unison with each other. Only in the Universe of *Tikkun* is each *Sefirah* or group of *Sefirot* a complex integrated entity. The human parallel to this is striking. In order for man to fulfill his purpose, he must first be created with the possibility of integrating all the forces of his personality. Until the creation of the *Partzufim* this was impossible. See *Etz Chaim* 13:3 (p. 180).
19. *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, *ibid.*
20. See above, note 12.
21. See Chapter 4, note 30.
22. *Etz Chaim* 11:15 (p. 151*f.*), 22:1 (p. 309), 23:6 (p. 325); *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:1 (p. 26).
23. See *Etz Chaim* 11:6 (p. 153*f.*).
24. See Chapter 10, notes 17 and 48.
25. *Niddah* 30b. This is based on Job's words, "Oh, that I was as in the *months* of old, in the days when God watched over me, when *His lamp shone over my head*, and I walked through the darkness by His light" (Job 29:2-3).
26. The light with which one can see from one end of the universe to the other is also the light that Adam saw in the Garden of Eden and which will be made available to the righteous in the World to Come; *Chagigah* 12a; *Zohar* 1:45b, 2:148b; *cf.* Rashi on Genesis 1:4; *Berakhoth* 17a; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefillin* 5:1.
27. *Zohar* 3:144b; *Nefesh HaChaim* 1:6.
28. *Cf. Zohar* 1:257b, 3:10a.
29. *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 10*ff.*
30. *Tikuney Zohar* 70 (p. 135b).
31. See Chapter 3, note 7.
32. See Chapter 5, note 21.

33. *Zohar* 3:119b; *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a). See Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1; Thirteen Principles of Faith no.2.
34. See Chapter 4, note 20.
35. *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:3.
36. As Creator of all things, God is also the Creator of space and time. He therefore does not exist in space and time; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 2:11-12; *Sh'vil Emunah ad. loc.* 2:11:10; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:8, 2:30; *Ikkarim* 2:18; *Asarah Ma'amaroth, Choker Din* 1:16; *Derekh Mitzvotekha* 57b.
37. See Chapter 6, note 7.
38. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:8. See R. Abraham Abulafia, *Otzar Eden HaGanuz*, p. 9a.
39. *Bereshith Rabbah* 68:10; *Shemoth Rabbah* 45:6; *Midrash Tehillim* 50; Rashi, Ba'aley Tosafot, on Exodus 33:21; *Pesikta Rabatai* 21 (104b); Radak on Psalms 90:1; *Nefesh HaChaim* 3:1-3.
40. *Cf. Zohar* 1:65a.
41. *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 299).
42. *Ibid.* 12:1 (p. 168).
43. Daniel 1:1-6, Rashi *ad. loc.* Daniel was exiled to Babylon with King Yehoiakim, almost one year before Ezekiel; *Megillah* 11b, Rashi *ad. loc.* See next note and Chapter 1, note 13.
44. In 3319 (442 B.C.E.) Nebuchadnezzar assumed the throne of Babylon and conquered the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. He then defeated Yehoiakim, king of Judea, and the Jewish state became a vassal of Babylon (2 Kings 24:1). In 3321 (440 B.C.E.) Jeremiah first predicted the destruction of the Temple (Jeremiah 25). In 3327 (434 B.C.E.) Nebuchadnezzar exiled King Yehoiakim to Babylon (along with Daniel, Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah) and installed his son Yekhoniah (Yehoiakhin) as the next king of Judea. Three months later, he exiled Yekhoniah to Babylon (along with Ezekiel, Mordekhai and Esther), and installed Zidkiahu in his place. In the 11th year of Zidkiahu's reign Nebuchadnezzar finally destroyed the Temple and exiled the remainder of the nation to Babylon; Esther 2:6, *Targum ad. loc.*; 2 Kings 24: 14-15; *Megillah* 11b; *Gittin* 88a.
45. See Chapter 3, "The Chariot and the Cherubs."
46. Rashi, *Megillah* 3a, *s.v. Delhu*; *cf. Turey Aven ad. loc.*; *Petach Eynayim, Megillah* 14a. See also *Sanhedrin* 94a; Maharsha *ad. loc.*; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:45, Second Level; Ramban on Genesis 18:2, Numbers 22:23, 22:31. *Cf. Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
47. Daniel 9:14; *cf.* Daniel 7:9-28; Malbim *ad. loc.*
48. Thus, the destruction of the Temple, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and the total loss of memory at the time of birth are all human parallels to the shattering of the vessels. See above, notes 25 and 26. *Cf. Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 37, 80. Conversely, the building of the Third Temple (Ezekiel 40-44), the Messianic Kingdom, the Redemption and the World to Come parallel the rectification of the *Partzufim*.
49. *Zohar* 3:288b (top), 289a (top); *Mevo Shearim* 3:1:1 (p. 94).
50. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 1, *Perush ad. loc.*
51. *Etz Chaim* 12:1 (p. 168); *Mevo Shearim* 3:1:1 (p. 96). Kabbalistically, *Atik Yomin* and *Arikh Anpin* are depicted as two *Partzufim*, one higher than the other. In addition, the lower extremity of *Atik Yomin* enters into and is clothed within *Arikh Anpin*. This follows the rule that the "lower" level is

always a vehicle for that which stands above it; *Etz Chaim* 13:1 (p. 176*f.*), 13:2 (p. 177). See Chapter 3, notes 3 and 4.

52. *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 298f.). See *ibid.* 13:2 (p. 177).
53. Of course this involves an infinite regression of *creating* that presupposes an act of will and *willing* that presupposes an act of creation; see Chapter 3, "Adam Kadmon." It is for this reason that many early Kabbalists identified the *Sefirah* of *Keter* with the Infinite *Ain Sof* itself; *Zohar* 3:258a; *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 299). The only escape clause is that this is operating on a level above logic where paradoxes such as these can exist.
54. *Zohar* 2:42b, 2:288a, 3:11a; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Toledoth Adam*, *Beth HaShem* (3d); *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:64-67. See *Shevuoth* 35a; *Yad*, *Yesodey HaTorah* 6:1.
55. See Chapter 5, note 22.
56. *Cf. Sha'arey Orah* 3, 4 (p. 37b *ff.*); *Sha'arey Kedushah* 4:2 (p. 20 no.14). See below, note 59.
57. See *Shemoth Rabbah* 3:6 on Exodus 3:14.
58. Regarding the strong prohibition against worshipping the *Sefirot*, see *Teshuvoth Rashba* 189; *Teshuvoth Rivash* 157; R. Abraham Abulafia, *VeZoth LeYehudah*, p. 19; *Pardes Rimonim* 4; *Elemah Rabatai* 1:1:2; Radbaz, *Metzudot David* 2; *Shomer Emunim (HaKadmon)* 2:64-65; *Kisey Melekh* on *Tikuney Zohar* 22 (p. 94b no.50).
59. *Pardes Rimonim* 32:2.
60. See *Yad*, *Avodah Zarah* 1:1.
61. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 7-10.
62. *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a); *cf. Likutey Halakhoth*, *Birkat HaShachar* 3:34.
63. *Zohar* 1:130b, 3:288b *ff.*
64. *Ibid.*; *Mevo Shearim* 3:2:11 (p. 140), 3:2:12 (p. 143). See Chapter 5, note 39.
65. *Cf. Zohar* 2:177b, 3:138b *ff.*, 3:140b; *Etz Chaim* 13:9 (p. 192); HaGra on *Sifra DeTzeniuta* 3 (p. 25a).
66. *Kellalim Rishonim* 23; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 105-108.
67. *Zohar* 3:132a.
68. *Zohar* 3:288b, 3:138b; *Etz Chaim* 13:5 (p. 186), 22:1 (p. 308) *Kellalim Rishonim* 21.
69. *Etz Chaim* 13:3 (p. 180); *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 15, *Perush loc. cit*; *ibid.*, 101-104. *Cf. Zohar* 3:10b.
70. *Etz Chaim* 11:3 (p. 149), *s.v. VeDa*; *Mevo Shearim* 3:1:1 (p. 95); *Sha'ar HaGilgulim* 1 (p. 12).
71. *Zohar* 3:4a, 3:290b; See *Etz Chaim*, *Sha'ar HaKellalim* 2 (p. 4); 14:7 (p. 216*f.*).
72. *Etz Chaim* 14:7 (p. 216), 28:1 (p. 61).
73. See above, notes 22 and 27.
74. Of course, the forces of creation, corresponding to the letters *Yod* and *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, can never be separated, since if they were, the world would cease to exist. The forces of providence, paralleling the final *Vav* and *Heh* of the Tetragrammaton, can be separated, as when God hides His face from the world in response to mankind's evil. See Deuteronomy 31:18; *cf. Zohar* 2:14a; *Etz Chaim* 6:7 (p. 88), 6:8

(p. 89). It is for this reason that the Ari prescribed meditations which involved uniting the *Yod* and *Heh* with the *Vav* and *Heh*, in order to join the forces of providence with the forces of creation; see *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, p. 38b.

75. *Mevo Shearim* 3:1:1 (p. 95); *Kellalim Rishonim* no.26.
76. The positive commandments parallel the 248 parts of the body (*Ohaloth* 1:8), while the negative commandments parallel the 365 major blood vessels, tendons and nerves (collectively *giddim*, גידים) in the human body; *Targum Yonathan* on Genesis 1:27. See also *Tanchuma*, *Ki Tetze* 2; *Zohar* 1:170b, 2:228b; *Tikuney Zohar* 30 (74b); *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 10 (147a); *Pardes Rimonim* 31:8; *Tanya* 23 (28a); *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, *HaAzinu (77c), quoted in Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Yithro* 9.
77. *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*, p. 8*ff.* The Torah is therefore called God's Name; *Zohar* 2:90b, 3:13a; Ramban, Introduction to Commentary on Torah, and *Torath HaShem Temimah*, p. 167. Also see Maharsha, *Berakhoth* 21a, *s.v. MiNayin*; *Zohar* 2:87a, 2:124a, 3:19a, 3:35b, 3:61a, 3:71b, 3:72b, 3:73a, 3:75a, 3:80b, 3:98b, 3:159a, 3:265b, 3:298b; *Teshuvath Radbaz* 3:643 (1068).
78. *Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, *VaEtChanan* (p. 84). *Cf. Tanya* 4 (8a *ff.*).
79. *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (p. 17a); *cf. Sha'ar HaMitzvot*, *ibid.* See Chapter 4, note 30; Chapter 9, note 13.
80. *Shabbath* 31a. *Cf. Berakhoth* 5a; *Yad*, Introduction; *Yad*, *Mamrim* 1:1; *Kuzari* 3:35. Thus the key to understanding the Torah is the Oral tradition handed down from the time of Moses; Ramban on Genesis 1:1; *Ma'amar HaIkkarim* (Ramchal), *BeInyan Torah SheB'Al Peh*. See Chapter 1, notes 2, 31 and 32.
81. *Etz Chaim* 16:1 (p. 234).
82. *Cf. Zohar* 3:83b, bottom.
83. *Etz Chaim* 16:5 (p. 240); 25:1 (p. 3).
84. Song of Songs 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1, 5:2. *Cf.* Proverbs 7:4.
85. Leviticus 20:17; *Sefer HaChinukh* 192.
86. *Derekh Mitzvotekha*, *Mitzvat Arayoth* 207 (p. 58*f.*), 196 (p. 60*f.*).
87. Genesis 12:13, 20:2, 26:7.
88. *Zohar* 1:140b; 3:100b; *cf. Zohar* 1:111 b (bottom); *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 3:11:2.
89. *Zohar* 3:258a on Proverbs 3:19; *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, p. 264*ff.* See Chapter 9, note 8.
90. *Etz Chaim* 25:5-8, 26:2, 28:1-2. See *ibid.*, 30:5 (p. 97*ff.*), *Kitvey Yad HaRaShash*; *Kellalim Rishonim* 22.
91. *Etz Chaim* 22:1 (p. 308*f.*); *Mevo Shearim* 5:1:12 (p. 216); *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Inyan Pesach* (p. 138*f.*); *Kellalim Rishonim* 23.
92. See *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 7, *Lekh Lekha* 19; *Keter Shem Tov* 121; *Tzava'ath HaRivash*, pp. 233-234.
93. *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, *VaYeshev* p. 85*ff.*, *ibid. Shemoth* p. 110.
94. *Sefer Yetzirah* 2:3; HaGra *loc. cit.* According to the Ramak and the Ari these five phonetic groups begin with the throat (Gutturals), the most internal part of the mouth, and continue outward to the lips (Labials); *Pardes Rimonim* 27:27; *Etz Chaim* 25:22 (p. 12); *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*, p. 297. *Cf. Zohar* 2:123a.
95. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:5. See Chapter 4, note 49.

96. This is accomplished first of all by becoming highly aware of the physical processes involved in pronouncing the letters. While speech itself involves *Binah* consciousness which is verbal, the pronounciation of the letters is an automatic activity, and hence, it involves a non-verbal *Chokhmah* consciousness. See above, note 37; Chapter 6, note 7.
97. *Etz Chaim* 19:6 (p. 275-6), 29:1 (p. 69); *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Inyan Rosh HaShanah*, *Drush Aleph* (p. 216), *s.v. U'LeVaer*.
98. *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *ibid.*, *Drush Gimel* (p. 220*ff.*), *Inyan Succot*, *Drush Gimel* (p. 299); *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Rosh HaShanah* 6:7.
99. *Likutey Halakhoth*, *ibid.*
100. One may raise a general objection here. Why does the story say that he has the power to shoot the arrow and then retrieve it? Why does it mention shooting? Wouldn't it be better not to shoot the arrows in the first place? But actually, shooting the arrow is in itself part of the healing process. Only if the *Tzadik* can shoot the arrows, i.e. identify with the evil deed through his free will, is he qualified to undo its damage; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *ibid.*
101. See Chapter 10, note 47.
102. *Yerushalmi*, *Succah* 5:1 (22b); *cf. Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 262.
103. Leviticus 23:42; *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *Inyan Succot*, *Drush Daleth* (p. 303); *cf. Likutey Moharan* 21:4.
104. Leviticus 23:40.
105. *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *ibid.*, *Drush Heh* (p. 306*ff.*).
106. *Ibid.* p. 309.
107. *Zohar* 3:24b, 3:255b, 2:256a; *Tikuney Zohar* 70 (120b). *Cf. Bahir* 175-177.
108. *Bahir* 175; *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, *ibid.* p. 307 bottom; *cf. Likutey Halakhoth*, *Nedarim* 4:24.

Chapter 12

1. See Chapter 3, "Adam Kadmon."
2. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 6, *Perush loc. cit. s.v. Hab'chanah Gimel*; *ibid.* 25, *Perush loc. cit.*
3. Thus, the highest aspect of *Adam Kadmon* involves the level of God's Will that precedes the original act of *Tzimtzum* and is the source for the entire Kabbalistic universe that results from the *Tzimtzum*. The second aspect of *Adam Kadmon* then involves the extension of God's Will into the Kabbalistic universe. It is this Will that sustains the totality of creation and prevents it from utterly ceasing to exist. See Chapter 3, notes 13 and 14.
4. *Etz Chaim* 1:1:2 (p. 30), 1:1:4 (p. 37), 3:1 (p. 48); *Kellaley Ma'amar HaChokhmah* 3 (p. 308*f.*). See Chapter 3, note 3.
5. *Ibid.* 1:1:2 (p. 32); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 43.
6. *Etz Chaim* 1:1:4 (p. 37), 3:2 (p. 51).
7. Even the highest *Sefirah* of *Atzilut*, *Keter*-Crown, is said to reach up only to the "waist" of *Adam Kadmon*. The same is true of all the *Partzufim* of *Atzilut*, *Beriyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. Each one clothes the one above it from the "waist" down; *Etz Chaim* 1:1:4 (p. 36*f.*),

3:2 (p. 51), 8:2 (p. 107*f.*); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 41; *Nahar Shalom*, p. 8*ff.* See *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefillin* 5:34.

8. See Ramchal, *Kellalim MiSefer Milchemet Moshe* 8 (in *Da'at Tevunot*, Bnei Brak 1975) p. 356*ff.* See Chapter 3, note 15.
9. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 3, 4; *Kellaley Kin'ath HaShem* 2 (in *Da'at Tevunot*) p. 321*f.*
10. *Pardes Rimonim* 11; *Etz Chaim* 1:1:4 (p. 34).
11. *Tanya*, *Iggeret HaKodesh* 29 (149a); *Kedushath Levi*, *Bereshith* (p. 1).
12. See above, note 5.
13. *Likutey Moharan* 24:1, 8.
14. R. David Majar, *Chasdey David* 5. *Cf. Nahar Shalom*, p. 20.
15. *Etz Chaim* 4:1 (p. 53), 20:5 (p. 288); *Chasdey David* 2. See Chapter 2, note 44.
16. See Chapter 2, note 41.
17. *Etz Chaim* 4:1 (p. 53); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 145.
18. *Etz Chaim*, *ibid.* (p. 52*f.*).
19. *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 44. See *Etz Chaim* 5:2 (p. 65*f.*). It is important to mention at this point that even the level of *Adam Kadmon* that manifests after the initial *Tzimtzum* and which fills the entire Vacated Space (see Chapter 13) is utterly beyond conception. It is for this reason that nothing can be said about *Adam Kadmon* itself. Any and all descriptive terms are only "borrowed" from a lower level; see R. Isaac Chaber, *Pitchey Shearim*, pp. 16-49.
20. *Etz Chaim* 4:1 (p. 54).
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Cf. Ibid.* 8:1 (p. 104).
23. *Cf. Ibid.* 5:1 (p. 62).
24. *Ibid.* 5:2 (p. 65, top). See below, note 30.
25. *Cf.* Genesis 8:21; Hirsch, *loc. cit.*
26. Or, "a fragance that brings down spiritual energy;" *Bahir* 109; Recanati, *Tetzaveh* 15a; R. Bachya on Genesis 8:21; *Avodath HaKodesh* 1:6.
27. *Cf.* Exodus 30:35-36; Leviticus 10:1, 15:12; Numbers 17:4. See Ibn Ezra, Ramban, on Leviticus 30:9.
28. *Cf. Sefer Yetzirah* 5:1, 5:10.
29. *Etz Chaim* 6:1 (p. 75).
30. *Cf. Ibid.* 5:2 (p. 65, top) on Genesis 2:7, 7:22.
31. See Chapter 2, "The Inner Space" and "Ruach."
32. *Tikuney Zohar* 70 (132a), 6 (145b).
33. *Etz Chaim* 6:1 (p. 75).
34. *Cf. Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 1 (76b); *Be'er Mayim Chaim*, *Bereshith*, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Bereshith* 51.
35. *Etz Chaim* 4:1 (p. 54), 4:3 (p. 56); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 143.
36. *Likutey Moharan* 24:1. *Cf. Zohar* 1:65a; *Etz Chaim* 4:2 (p. 55), 7:2 (p. 94 *ff.*) See also *Bereshith Rabbah* 2:4.
37. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:8 on Ezekiel 1:14. See Chapter 11, note 38.
38. The ability to return with a clear message is thus an important difference between prophecy and a simple mystical experience. While the experience of other mystics is indistinct and inarticulate, that of a prophet is clear and specific. One of the mystic's greatest difficulties is describing the mystical experience because of its indefinable, incommunicable nature, where even

on the highest levels, it is nothing more than a general sensation of spiritual power. The true prophet, on the other hand, is able to channel this spiritual power, focusing it clearly enough to obtain an unambiguous message or vision. As the Ramchal explains, this level cannot be attained all at once. The prophet must elevate himself step by step until he is able to bear the full influx of the prophetic spirit; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4. See Part II, note 65.

39. This involves the Kabbalistic technique of breaking down each letter of the Hebrew alphabet into its constituent letters. For example, the letter א is pronounced *Aleph*, and is made up of *Aleph*, *Lamed* and *Phe* (אלף). The letter ב is pronounced *Beth* and is made up of *Beth*, *Yod* and *Tav* (בית). The letter י is pronounced *Yod*, and is made up of *Yod*, *Vav* and *Daleth* (יוד). Since each letter of the alphabet has a numerical equivalent, these "expansions" also yield greater sums when the letters are added together. Thus *Aleph* is 1, but *Aleph* and *Lamed* and *Phe* is 111. *Beth* is 2, but *Beth* and *Yod* and *Tav* is 412. *Yod* is 10, but *Yod* and *Vav* and *Daleth* is 20. This technique is employed with all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. As we shall see, when it is applied to the letters of the Tetragrammaton, the result is four possible expansions. See below, note 45.
40. *Etz Chaim* 5:1 (p. 61*f.*), 8:1 (p. 103*f.*).
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 43 bottom.
43. *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tolaim* 4:3, 5, 8.
44. *Etz Chaim* 42:13 (p. 308).
45. *Ibid.* 5:1 (p. 61); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 43.
46. *Etz Chaim* 4:1 (p. 54), 4:3 (p. 56), 8:1 (p. 104*f.*).
47. Similar to the words and letters of the Torah, these notes were received prophetically by Moses; *Megillah* 3a; *Chagigah* 6a; *Nedarim* 37b; *Yerushalmi, Megillah* 4:1 (28b); *Bereshith Rabbah* 36:8; *Sefer Chasidim* 302; *Teshuvoth Chatam Sofer* 6:86.
48. *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 56, 282.
49. *Cf. Sichot HaRan* 273; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Basar BeChalav* 5:19; *ibid. Tolaim* 4:11.
50. *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 92; *Zohar* 3:101a, 3:22b; *Tikuney Zohar* 13 (pp. 27b-29b). *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 205; *Sichot HaRan* 141; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefillah* 4:20. See Chapter 9, note 15.
51. On *Rosh HaShanah* the shofar is sounded in the following manner: *tekiah-shevarim-teruah-tekiah*, *tekiah-shevarim-tekiah*, *tekiah-teruah-tekiah*. This is a total of ten sounds.
52. *Likutey Moharan* 282; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *P'ru U'Rvu* 3:10.
53. *Etz Chaim* 8:1 (p. 103*ff.*).
54. *Ibid.* p. 104. The original Torah scrolls were written without vowels just as they are written today. Nevertheless, the precise readings were given to Moses and preserved orally until they were put into writing; *Teshuvoth Hai Gaon*, in *Torathan shel Rishonim* 3 (p. 40); *Machzor Vitri* 120; *Kuzari* 3:30 (35b); *Teshuvoth Radbaz* 3:643; *Teshuvoth Rivash* 284; *Yoreh Deah* 174:7; *Nedarim* 37b; Tosafot, Ran, *ad. loc., s.v. Mikra; Yerushalmi, Megillah* 4:1 (28b); Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael* 66; *Bahir* 36-44; *Tikuney Zohar* 69 (107a); *Pardes Rimonim* 21:1.

55. This is discussed at length in *Tikuney Zohar* 70 (108a). See *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, p. 14; *Likutey Halakhoth, Pesach, Roshay Perakim* 9:3.
56. *Likutey Moharan* 24; *Likutey Halakhoth, P'ru U'Rvu* 3:1.
57. See *Etz Chaim* 5:3 (p. 66), 5:5 (p. 69). *Cf. Shabbath* 104a; *Bahir* 14-20, 27-29.
58. *Etz Chaim* 5:1 (p. 61); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 43. See *Yad, Sefer Torah* 7:8. *Cf. Menachoth* 29b.
59. *Etz Chaim* 5:1 (p. 63*f.*). It is interesting to note that *BeN* (52) has the same numerical value as *Behemah* (בהמה) which means "animal," whereas *MaH* (45) has the same numerical value as *Adam* (אדם), which means "man." Man was created from *MaH* and *BeN*, and this is why he has free will. In addition, the word *MaH* (מה) means "what." It therefore alludes to man's unique ability to ask himself what he is and wonder about the relevance of his existence in the universe; *cf.* Psalms 8:5; *Zohar* 1:2a.
60. *Likutey Halakhoth, Tolaim* 4:2. See above. note 43.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Likutey Halakhoth, Pesach, Roshay Perakim* 9:1.
63. *Ibid. Tolaim* 4:8; *Kedushath Shabbath* (Lemberg, 1876). *Cf. Zephaniah* 3:16-20.

Chapter 13

1. *Etz Chaim* 1:1:2 (p. 27*f.*); *cf. Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 14; *Mevo Shearim* 1:1:1 (p. 2*f.*).
2. *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:34-35; *Amud HaAvodah, Hakdamah Gedolah* 24. See Chapter 2, note 23.
3. Ramchal, *Sefer HaKellalim* 2-6; *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 26; *cf. Derekh HaShem* 1:1:5. See *Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 1, 9; *Teshu'oth Chen, Chayay Sarah*, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 6.
4. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 25, *Perush ad. loc.*
5. R. Shneur Zalman, *Torah Or, Miketz* 39a. See *Pelach Rimon* 4:3; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:36. Also see *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 297 bottom); *Zohar HaRakia* on *Zohar* 1:15a.
6. See Chapter 2, note 22.
7. *Zohar* 1:15a, *Derekh Emet loc. cit.* note 6; *Tikuney Zohar* 5 (19a), *Nitzotzey Or loc. cit.* note 15. See also *Adam D'Atzilut* 2.
8. *Cf. Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 27. See Part II, note 132.
9. *Leshem Sh'vo VeAchlamah, Hakdamot VeShearim*, pp. 122-125.
10. See *Chasdey David* 76.
11. *Cf. Bahir* 1. See Chapter 3, "Yetzirah" and "Asiyah," notes 30 and 34.
12. *Tikuney Zohar* 57 (91b). *Cf. Berakhoth* 10a; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4; *Shemoth Rabbah* 2:9; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 3:15; *Zohar* 3:225a, 3:257b; *Zohar Chadash* 35c; *Shomer Emunim* (*HaKadmon*) 2:11 no.1; R. Shneur Zalman, *Likutey Torah, Emor* (34b), quoted in *Magid Devarav LeYaacov, Likutim Chadashim, Emunah* 3 (p. 125a); *Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud*

VeHaEmunah 7 (82b); *Kedushath Levi*, *Mishpatim* (p. 139). See Chapter 2, notes 17 and 26.

13. *Likutey Moharan* 64:1.
14. See Chapter 5, note 20. The paradox of the *Tzimtzum* thus develops because of our double vision. When we look at God through the lens of "attributes of action," we see Him as Creator, and therefore, we must say that He removed Himself from the Vacated Space in order to create the world. On the other hand, when we look at God through the lens of "negative attributes," we cannot say that He is absent from any place. It is only in the Ultimate Future that we will no longer have to look at God through lenses, and therefore, all dichotomies and paradoxes will be resolved. Regarding this, it is written, "Your eyes shall behold your Master" (Isaiah 30:20). See also Chapter 1, note 43.
15. *Tanya*, *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* 6 (80a *ff.*). See Chapter 5, note 7.
16. *Bahir* 1, *Or Bahir loc. cit.*; *Tanya*, *ibid.* (83b).
17. *Likutey Moharan* 64:3, 6; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tolaim* 4:2.
18. *Etz Chaim* 1:1:2 (p. 28*f.*); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot*, p. 17*f. Cf. Pardes Rimonim* 4:9 (end); *Leshem Sh'vo VeAchlamah*, *Hakdamot VeShearim*, p. 35*ff.*
19. This is alluded to by the Ari himself. He explains that when the *Or Ain Sof* entered the *Chalal* through the *Kav*, the first sphere that was emanated did not touch the circumference of the *Chalal*. A separation (no-man's land) was thus necessary in order to distinguish between the light that filled the *Chalal* and the *Or Ain Sof* that surrounded it. If this were not so, the inner light would have been overwhelmed by the surrounding light and all would have returned to a state of absolute oneness; *Etz Chaim*, *ibid.*
20. *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 48; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Tefilath Minchah* 4:5, *Techumin* 6:9, *Netilath Yadaim Shacharith* 4:11, *Betziath HaPat* 5:5, *Birkath HaPeroth* 5:18.
21. *Chagigah* 14b; R. Chananel ben Chushiel, commentary *ad. loc.* See *Hekhalot Rabatai* 26:2.
22. *Cf.* R. Hai Gaon as quoted in *HaKotev*, *Ain Yaacov Chagigah* no.11. See also *Otzar HaGaonim*, *Chagigah* 14b, *Chelek Teshuvoth* p. 14; *She'eloth U'Teshuvoth HaGaonim* (Lyck, 1864) no.99. See *Otzar HaChaim*, p. 165a; *Sefer HaTzeruf*, p. 2b. See Chapter 1, note 10 (end).
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Cf. Otzar Eden HaGanuz* 8a; *Sefer HaCheshek* 31b; *Sheva Netivot HaTorah* (in *Philosophie und Kabbalah*) p. 11.
25. *Mevo Shearim* 6:2:3 (pp. 292-293). See Part II, notes 226-228, 252-253.
26. Rashi, *ad. loc.*
27. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:51. This "kiss" is mentioned in the Talmud, *Berakhoth* 8a, *Moed Katan* 28a, *Bava Bathra* 17a; *Devarim Rabbah* 11:10. See Commentaries on Psalm 91:14; Recanati, *VaYechi* p. 37b on *Zohar* 3:120b; *Sefer HaTzeruf*, p. 4b; *Chayay Olam HaBa*, p. 5b.
28. *Devarim Rabbah* 11:5, 11:10.
29. *Zohar* 2:88b, 2:89a.
30. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:51, Shem Tov, Afudi, Crescas *ad. loc.*
31. *Berakhoth* 64a; *cf.* Psalms 84:8.

Part II

1. *Chagigah* 2:1 (11b). See Part I, Chapter 1, note 18.
2. Bartenura *ad. loc.*
3. Maharsha *ad. loc.*
4. *Cf. Iggeret HaRamban* 5, quoted in *Sha'arey Kedushah* 4:2:13 (Jerusalem, 1988) p. 18. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 10.
5. Rashi in *Ain Yaacov*, *Chagigah ad. loc.*
6. R. Eliezer of Worms on *Sefer Yetzirah* 2:5 (4b, 15b); *Emek HaMelekh ad. loc.* (9c). Also see Raavad *ad. loc.*; *Shoshan Yesod Olam*, pp. 100, 199, 203. *Cf.* Ibn Ezra on Isaiah 26:4, Psalms 68:5.
7. There is evidence that creating a *Golem* was not primarily a physical procedure, but rather, a highly advanced meditative technique. By chanting the appropriate letter arrays together with the letters of the Tetragrammaton, the initiate could form a very real spiritual body or mental image of a human being. It was only once this conceptual *Golem* was completed that it could be transferred to a clay form and actually animate it. See R. Yehudah Barceloni (p. 103) on *Sanhedrin* 65b; *Yad Ramah ad. loc.*; *Ner Elokim* (Abulafia), quoted in G. Scholem, *HaKabbalah shel Sefer HaTemunah veshel Abulafia* (Jerusalem, 1965) p. 217. Also, see *She'eloth HaZaken* no.97 (Oxford, Ms. Neubauer 2396) p. 53a, quoted by Scholem in *Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, p. 188, note 1.
8. *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*, p. 58 top. See Part I, Chapter 1, note 28.
9. See R. Yitzchak Yehoshua (ben Yaacov Bonet) de Lattes (1498-1571), Introduction to *Zohar* (first edition, Mantua 1558).
10. The Hebrew word for meditation is *hitbodedut* (התבודדות) which means literally "self isolation." Besides physical isolation, it involves mental isolation, where through meditation one isolates the mind from all extraneous thought; R. Abraham ben HaRambam, *Sefer HaMaspik LeOvdey HaShem* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 177*ff*. The Ralbag similarly speaks of "the isolation (*hitbodedut*) of the consciousness from the imagination, or of both of these from the other perceptive mental faculties;" *Milchamoth HaShem* 2:6 (Riva di Trento, 1560) p. 19a; R. Bachya, Leviticus 8:8. R. Chaim Vital likewise states that "one must seclude himself (*hitboded*) in thought;" *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:8; *cf. Likutim Yekarim* 29, 38.
11. *Hitbodedut*-Meditation consisted of the repetition of divine Names, the chanting of psalms and deep meditative prayer. These techniques were used to totally isolate the mind, both from external stimuli and internal thought, leaving it perfectly clear to receive the divine influx; *Sha'arey Kedushah*, Introduction and Parts Three and Four; *Derekh HaShem* 3:2:5, 3:4:4. *Cf. Hekhalot Rabatai* 16:4; *Teshuvoth Rashba* 220; Tosafot, *Chagigah* 14b, *s.v. Nikhnesu*, *Gittin* 84a, *s.v. Al Menath Sh'Ta'ali*; Ramban, *Torath HaShem Temimah*, p. 168; *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, pp. 74, 108; *Pardes Rimonim* 21:1.
12. It is for this reason that the prophets were totally unconscious of their surroundings when they received their visions; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:6; *Sifri* on Deuteronomy 34:10; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 14:34; *Zohar* 1:171a ; Rashi on Numbers 24:4; *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:3.

13. Ramban on Deuteronomy 13:2. *Cf.* R. Hai Gaon, quoted in commentary of R. Moshe Botril on *Sefer Yetzirah* 4:2; *Derekh HaShem* 3:1:6.
14. *Tur, Orach Chaim* 98; *Shulchan Arukh, ibid.* See *Shiur Komah* 13:3, 17; *Sefer Charedim, Mitzvat Teshuvah* 3: *Tzava'at HaRivash* 8; *Likutim Yekarim* 38; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Acharey* (Koretz, 1780) p. 88c; Chida, *Avodath HaKodesh, Tziporen Shamir* 51; *Midbar Kedemoth, Heh* 13; *Likutey Moharan* 52.
15. *Etz Chaim* 50:10 (p. 406*f.*); *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6; *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6.
16. *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 2:3. See, however, *Pardes Rimonim* 2:7, 24:11.
17. A prophet's first experience may be so negligible that he might not even recognize it as prophecy; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4:3; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:44; *cf.* 1 Samuel 3:4 *ff.*; Abarbanel on 1 Samuel 3:7.
18. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:45; R. Bachya on Leviticus 8:8; *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:3-4.
19. *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 2:4, 7:6; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:34, 2:41, 2:42. See Ramban on Numbers 22:23, 22:31; Raavad on *Sefer Yetzirah*, Introduction (Jerusalem, 1962) p. 4c; *Pardes Rimonim* 24:15. *Cf. Vayikra Rabbah* 1:9; *Shemoth Rabbah* 2:8; *Zohar* 1:149b, 2:234b; *Berakhoth* 55b. See also Ramban, *Torath HaShem Temimah*, p. 148; R. Bachya on Numbers 24:14; *Sodi Razia*, p. 8; *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek Sithrey Torah* 28 (136c).
20. Raavad, *ibid.* See Part I, Chapter 1, note 28.
21. *Derekh HaShem* 3:1:6.
22. *Cf. Berakhoth* 66b, and Rashi *ad. loc. s.v. Hirhurey*, where we find that all dreams follow one's daytime thoughts. See *Zohar* 1:183a.
23. *Cf. Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 34 (79b); Rashi on *Bereshith Rabbah* 14:9, *s.v. SheHi*; *Etz Chaim* 50:10 (p. 407).
24. *Berakhoth* 55b. *Cf. Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:7-8.
25. An individual seeking prophecy must be careful to keep his motives absolutely pure. The preparations for prophecy are extremely rigorous, and without Divine help, they can lead to psychosis and false visions rather than to true prophecy; *Shabbath* 149b; *Sanhedrin* 89a; Maharsha *ad. loc. s.v. Ruach Navoth*; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4:9. *Cf. Sha'arey Kedushah*, Introduction and 3:7.
26. R. Aryeh Kaplan, *Meditation and the Bible*, published 1978, 1981 by Samuel Weiser, Inc., pp. 20-21.
27. Ramchal, *Mesilat Yesharim*, available in two English translations, the most reliable being that of Shraga Silverstein, published by Phillip Feldheim, Inc.
28. These ten stages are 1) study, 2) carefulness, 3) diligence, 4) cleanliness, 5) abstention, 6) purity, 7) piety, 8) humility, 9) fear of sin, and 10) holiness; *Avodah Zarah* 20b; *Yerushalmi, Shabbath* 1:3 (8b); *Yerushalmi, Shekalim* 3:3 (14b; 9b in *Bavli*); *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:9; *Midrash Mishley* 15 (end); *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:933; Rif, *Avodah Zarah* 6a; Rosh, *Avodah Zarah* 1:20; *Machzor Vitri* 937; *Sefer Chasidim* 16; R. Avraham ibn Daud (Raavad) of Toledo, *HaEmunah HaRama* (Frankfurt am Mein, 1852) p. 74; *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 10 (148b); R. Yehudah Chayit, *Minchath Yehudah ad. loc.*; *Akedath Yitzchak* 35 (2:14a); *Reshith Chokhmah, Sha'ar HaAhavah* 11 (89d); *Mesilat Yesharim* 1 (end). Each of these stages is explained in detail in *Reshith Chokhmah*, and all of *Mesilat Yesharim* is a commentary on them. Although there are many varient readings, we follow that of

Avodah Zarah 20b, which is also that of *Mesilat Yesharim*. The text of *Mesilat Yesharim* was originally conceived as a handbook for initiates who sought to attain Divine Inspiration. The ten levels correspond directly to the ten levels of the *Sefirot*.

29. See above, notes 10 and 11.
30. *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 2:4.
31. See Part I, Chapter 4, note 19; Chapter 11, note 16.
32. Isaiah 6:2.
33. Ezekiel 1:6.
34. *Cf. Chagigah* 13b; Tosafot *ad. loc. s.v. Katub*, *Chulin* 92a *s.v. Barukh*. See *Zohar* 3:228a, 3:9b.
35. *Sanhedrin* 89a; Rashi on I Kings 22:7; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4:8.
36. Jeremiah 1:13-14; *cf.* Ezekiel 24:3.
37. *Yevamoth* 49b; Rashi on Ezekiel 1:1.
38. *Adir BaMarom* (Warsaw, 1886) p. 78a; *cf. Derekh HaShem* 3:3:5.
39. See Part I, Chapter 3, note 44. See also *Zohar* 1:28a, 2:45a, 2:82a, 2:82b, 3:155b; *Tikuney Zohar* 44 (82b); R. Bachya on Leviticus 1:1, Numbers 12:6; *Shiur Komah* 16 (32b); *Etz Chaim* 35:2 (p. 173); *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh, Drush* 1 (p.12).
40. *Zohar* 3:28a; Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1; Thirteen Principles no.7; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:6; *Or HaShem* 3:6:2; *Shiur Komah* 16(31a); *Derekh HaShem* 3:5:5. It is also written, "When I [God] speak through one of you... I will speak in a dream. Not so my servant Moses..." (Numbers 12:6). Thus, prophecy may occur in a prophetic dream or in a wakeful vision. A vision gained while the prophet is awake is a higher degree of prophecy; *Vayikra Rabbah* 15:2. Similarly, hearing words is a higher level than seeing a mere vision. Seeing the speaker is higher than hearing mere words. Hearing an angel speak is higher than being given a message through the vision of a human. **The highest level of prophecy is hearing a voice and knowing that it is directly from God**; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:45; *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6 (end); *cf. Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh, Drush* 1 (p. 10*f.*); Alshekh on Genesis 12:1 (p. 36b, end).
41. Rashi on Numbers 30:2.
42. *Cf. Tikuney Zohar* 18 (31b).
43. *Shoshan Sodot* (Koretz, 1784) p. 69; *cf.* R. Bachya on Numbers 12:6.
44. *Shemoth Rabbah* 3:1, 45:5; *Tanchuma, Shemoth* 19; *Derekh HaShem* 3:4:3.
45. *Yevamoth* 49b. See Ramban on Genesis 17:2 (end), Exodus 6:2.
46. *Zohar* 3:232a; *cf. Zohar* 3:7a, 3:265a. See Malbim on Deuteronomy 1:1-3.
47. See Deuteronomy 11:13-16, 29:3-5, 32:39-43. This also explains why the Hebrew name for Deuteronomy is *Devarim*, based on the opening verse of this book: "These are the words (*devarim*) that Moses spoke (*diber*) to all Israel" (1:1).
48. Exodus 4:4, 4:19, 4:21, 6:1, 7:1, 7:8, 7:14 etc.
49. Genesis 49:2.
50. Numbers 24:3, 24:15.
51. Judges 5:12.
52. See above, note 10.
53. See R. Nathan ben Yechiel (1035-1106) on *Chagigah* 14b: "the sages taught that four entered the Orchard (*Pardes*)... and gazed at the Chambers

(*Hekhalot*)... This does not mean that they actually ascended on high, but that they gazed and saw it in the chambers of their heart, viewing it just like something seen clearly with the eyes... This is the explanation of Rav Hai Gaon;" *Arukh, s. v. Avney Shayish Tahor.* R. Abraham Abulafia writes, "Meditate (*hitboded*) in a special place... cleanse your heart and soul of all other thoughts in the world. Imagine that your soul is separating from your body and that you are leaving the physical world behind;" *Or HaSekhel* 8:3, p. 108b *f.*, quoted in *Pardes Rimonim* 21:1. It is also quoted in *Sulam HaAliyah* 9, p. 95a *ff.*, quoted in *Kiryat Sefer* 22:167 *ff. Cf. Chayay Olam HaBa*, p. 19a *f.*; *Sulam HaAliyah* 7, p. 8a. R. Chaim Vital also states, "The separation (*hitpashtut*) of the soul from the body that is found in all books dealing with prophecy and Divine Inspiration is not a literal separation where the soul (*Neshamah*) actually leaves the body as during sleep, for then we would not be dealing with prophecy but with ordinary dreams;" *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:5; *cf. ibid.* 3:8.

54. *Cf.* R. Emanuel Frances (1610-1710), *Metek Sefathayim* 30.
55. *Hishtavut* is discussed at length by R. Yehudah Albotini (1453-1519) in *Sulam HaAliyah* 10, quoted in *Kitvey Yad BaKabbalah*, p. 226. See also *Chovoth HaLevavoth, Sha'ar Yichud HaMa'aseh* 5; *Magid Mesharim, BeShalach* (Jerusalem 1960) p. 57a; *Likutim Yekarim* 179; *Keter Shem Tov* 220; *Tzava'at HaRivash* 2; R. Shneuer Zalman, *Or Torah* on Psalm 16:8, p. 67a; Hirsch on Psalm 119:30, 131:2.
56. The concept of *Hishtavut* is also found in the Talmud where it is called "overcoming one's [natural] tendencies" (*ma'avir al midotav*); *Megillah* 28a; *Taanit* 25a. The Divine Presence (*Shekhinah*) is only revealed to one who has attained this level of total indifference to all outside influences; R. Isaac of Acco quoted in *Sha'arey Kedushah* 4:1:3, 4:1:6-7 (Jerusalem, 1988) pp. 3-4; also quoted in *Reshith Chokhmah, Sha'ar HaAnavah* 3 (220a); *cf. Kiddushin* 71a; *Yoma* 23a.
57. *Meirat Eynayim, Ekev* (Munich, Ms. 14 published in Jerusalem, 1979) p. 140b, quoted in *Sha'arey Kedushah* 4:2:5 (p. 8).
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:36.
60. *Cf.* Radak on 2 Kings 3:15; *Zohar* 2:45a.
61. *Shabbath* 30b; *Pesachim* 117a; *Midrash Tehillim* 24:4; *Tikuney Zohar* 21(56a); Rambam, *Shemoneh Perakim* 7; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:4; Rosh, *Berakhoth* 5:2; *Ikkarim* 3:10. *Cf.* Tosafot, *Bava Bathra* 121a, *s.v. Yom.*
62. *Pesachim* 66b. *Cf. Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh* 25 (138b).
63. *Yerushalmi, Succah* 5:1 (22b); *Bereshith Rabbah* 70:8; *Yalkuth Shimoni* 2:550; Tosafot, *Succah* 50b, *s.v. Chad. Cf. Minchath Yehudah* on *Ma'arekhet Elokut* 8 (96a), 10 (143b).
64. *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:4, 3:3:6. See Genesis 15:12; Daniel 10:8; Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:1, Seventh Principle; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:2.
65. *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek Sithrey Torah* 27 (135c, d); *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6. *Cf. Kedushath Levi, Lekh Lekha* (p. 19). See Part I, Chapter 12, note 38.
66. *Zohar* 2:2b (top).
67. *Chagigah* 13b; Rashi, Tosafot *ad. loc.*; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:6.
68. It is thus taught that a common handmaid experienced a greater revelation

at the Red Sea than Ezekiel did in his visions; *Mekhilta (BeShalach), Yalkuth Shimoni* (1:244), Rashi on Exodus 15:2; Ramban on Genesis 18:2. See *Zohar* 2:82a, 2:131a; *Shir HaShirim* Rabbah 2:9; *Shemoth Rabbah* 23:15; *Devarim Rabbah* 7:8; Radak, Abarbanel, on Ezekiel 1:28. Elijah also saw the *Merkavah; Zohar* 2:203a; Malbim on 1 Kings 19:11.

69. See *Torath HaShem Temimah* (in *Kitvey Ramban*) p. 168; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6. *Cf. Hekhalot Rabatai* 21, which speaks of creating a "chariot of light" with which to ascend into the supernal chambers. See Part I, Chapter 1, note 26.
70. *Megillah* 10b; *Bereshith Rabbah* 42:3.
71. Ezekiel 1:3. See Part I, Chapter 1, note 13.
72. *Mekhilta (Bo)* on Exodus 12:1; *Tanchuma, Bo* 5; *Midrash Tehillim* 132:3 (end); *Yalkuth Shimoni* 1:187, 2:336, 2:549, 2:883; Rashi, Radak, on Jonah 1:3; *Zohar* 1:85a, 1:121a, 2:170b; *Emunoth VeDeyoth* 3:5 (end); *Kuzari* 2:14; Ibn Ezra on Joel 3:1; *Teshuvoth Radbaz* 2:842; *HaEmunah HaRama*, p. 74; *Shiur Komah* 16 (30d); Radal on *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 10:11. This requirement is not mentioned by Rambam, and some maintain that his position is that this is not an absolute requirement; R. Abraham Abulafia, *Sefer HaCheshek* (JTS, Ms. 1801), p. 32a. *Cf.* R. Yaacov Emdin (Maharibatz) *Megillah* 15a. In the case of Ezekiel, we will see that once a prophet had attained prophecy in the Holy Land he could then obtain a vision even in other lands, provided that it was absolutely necessary for the sake of Israel; *Kuzari, ibid.*; Maharitz Chayot, *Moed Katan* 25a; *Zohar* 1:85a, 1:149a. See below, note 85.
73. *Sifri, Yalkuth Shimoni* (1:919), Ramban, on Deuteronomy 18:15.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Thus, if the generation is not worthy of prophecy, it cannot exist, even though there might be worthy individuals. See *Sanhedrin* 11a; *Berakhoth* 57a; *Succah* 28a; *Bava Bathra* 134a; *Tosefta, Sotah* 13:4; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 8 (20b); *Avoth DeRabbi Nathan* 14:1. Also see *Taanit* 30b; Tosafot, *Bava Bathra* 121a, *s.v. Yom.*
76. When the majority of Jews refused to return to the Holy Land in the time of Ezra, the land temporarily lost its special status with respect to prophecy, and prophecy ceased to exist; *Yoma* 9b; *Kuzari* 2:24 (40a). For the reason why prophecy lasted for 40 years during the Second Temple, see *Kuzari* 3:65 (67b); Abarbanel on Haggai 1:1. Also see *Arakhin* 32b; Tosafot, *Gittin* 36a, *s.v. BiZ'man* (end); *Yad, Shemitah VeYovel* 10:8-9.
77. *Iggeret Teiman* (in *Iggeroth HaRambam*) p. 30, from Joel 3:1.
78. *Yad, Melakhim* 12:2. *Cf.* Radak on Malachi 3:23; *Eruvin* 43b; *Eduyoth* 8:7; *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 43 (end).
79. This is necessary because the Messiah will be a king and a king can be anointed only by a prophet; *Yad, Melakhim* 1:3. *Cf. Tosefta, Sanhedrin* 3:2; *Sifri*, Ramban on Deuteronomy 17:15. Rambam also states that the Sanhedrin will be reestablished before the coming of the Messiah; Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 1:3; Bartenura, Tosafot Yom Tov, *ad. loc.*; Rambam on *Bekhoroth* 4:3; *Yad, Sanhedrin* 4:11. This is logical. Before a prophet can annoint a king, he must first be formally accredited by the Supreme Court of the Jewish People. Thus, there is a tradition that Elijah will initially appear before the great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem in order to be recognized

by this body; *Eruvin* 43b, Maharitz Chayot *ad. loc*; *Kereiti U'Pleiti*, *Beth HaSafek*, end; Rashash, *Sanhedrin* 13b.

80. *Zohar* 1:6b.
81. Since the word *Shekhinah* comes from the root *shakhan*, meaning "to dwell," *Shekhinah* denotes that God appears to be "dwelling" in a certain place. Since God's essence fills all creation, this cannot be taken literally. When we say that God "dwells" in a certain place or situation, we really mean that people can have an additional awareness of God there. Wherever the *Shekhinah* rests, there is an enhanced ability to experience the Divine. This is related to prophecy, because when a person has a prophetic experience, the *Shekhinah* is said to rest upon him; *Sanhedrin* 11a.
82. As we saw in Part I, Chapter 10, the "Kings" mentioned in Genesis 36:31-39 allude to the primitive vessels that were meant to hold God's light. Instead, they shattered and fell to a lower level, forming the realm of evil. These vessels were the earliest manifestation of the Female Principle (*Malkhut*) and the Divine Presence (*Shekhinah*). The shattering and falling of these vessels is thus the first manifestation of the exile of the *Shekhinah*, i.e. the complete concealment of the Divine and man's inability to experience God in his life.
83. In this respect, it is highly significant that Ezekiel's vision is called the vision of the *Merkavah*-Chariot. The idea of the chariot represents the *Shekhinah* being carried away into exile. Ezekiel's vision will thus involve his going after the chariot in order to find the *Shekhinah* and redeem Her. In order to do this, however, he will need to encounter the forces of evil that entrap the *Shekhinah*. These are the forces that discourage and confuse a person; *Zohar* 3:123a.
84. *Mekhilta (Bo)* to Exodus 12:1. See above, note 72.
85. *Ibid. Cf. Targum*, Rashi, Radak, on Ezekiel 1:3; *Moed Katan* 25a; Rashi *ad. loc.*, *s.v. SheHaya*; *Kuzari* 2:14.
86. A *Mikvah* is a man-made equivalent to any natural body of water. Water represents the basic concept of change, and therefore of renewal and purification, both physical and spiritual. In order to perform the function of a natural body of water, a man-made construction must therefore fulfill certain requirements. Based on Leviticus 11:36, these requirements are embodied in the idea of the *Mikvah*. They include: 1) the *Bor* (pool or pit) of the *Mikvah* must either be built into the ground, or be an integral part of a building attached to the ground. This excludes any vessel that can be removed and carried away, such as a tub, vat, or barrel. 2) The *Mikvah* must contain natural rain water. Spring water, lake or sea water, melted snow or ice can also be used. The only restrictions are that, 3) the water cannot be "drawn" or brought to the *Mikvah* through direct human intervention. And, 4) it must come to a complete "rest" in the *Mikvah*. It cannot be running or flowing, but rather "gathered" water. 5) The *Mikvah* must contain at least 40 *Sa'ah* (approximately 25 cubic feet or 200 gallons). From all these laws we learn that the receptacle for the *Mikvah* can be man-made. It is only the water that must come in a natural manner. When a person then immerses himself in such a body of water, he is nullifying himself and breaking down his ego in order to achieve rebirth and spiritual purification. He is disassociating himself from external

contamination and defilement and reassociating himself with the pure spirit of prophecy. See R. Aryeh Kaplan, *Waters of Eden — The Mystery of the Mikvah* (NCSY, 1976). See also *Likutey Halakhoth, Mikvaoth* 1:1, *Giluach* 4:16.

87. We thus find that all ritual purification in the Torah is designated by the expression *U'Rachatz BaMayim*, which literally means "he shall wash in the water]and be clean[." Specifically, Leviticus 15:16 states, "he shall wash *all his flesh* in the water." This clearly indicates that the purification process involves immersing one's entire body in water. The Talmud even finds an allusion in this verse to the volume of water needed for a complete immersion. This is the 200 gallons mentioned in note 86. This is only the amount of water needed for a *Mikvah*, however, since the Torah exempts a natural body of water from this requirement; *Sifri* on Leviticus 11:36; *Eruvin* 4b, 14b; *Yoma* 31a; *Chagigah* 11a; *Pesachim* 109a.
88. *Cf.* Ecclesiastes 3:15; *Arukh*, Radak (*Sherashim*), *s.v. Khebar* (קבר).
89. *Zohar* 1:6b, 1:85a, 2:82b.
90. *Waters of Eden*, p. 35.
91. *Bekhoroth* 55a.
92. *Tumah* (טומאה), ritual uncleanliness, and its counterpart, *Taharah* (טהרה), ritual cleanliness or purification, are spiritual rather than physical concepts. They primarily involve the soul rather than the body. *Tumah* is thus a type of spiritual exile or defilement that prevents a person from experiencing the Divine. *Taharah* is the process through which he disassociates himself from this fallen state and is reborn into a state of purity. This purification is primarily through immersion in water; *cf.* Leviticus 11:44; *Yad, Mikvaoth* 11:12; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Sha'ar HaOtiot, Taharah* (1:108a).
93. *Zohar* 1:26a, 3:247a; *Zohar Chadash, Yithro* 37b.
94. See Part I, Chapter 2, "The Ultimate Gift."
95. *Cf.* Genesis 2:8-15. In verses 8-9 the Torah tells how God placed man in a Garden in Eden where He had planted the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. In verse 15, the Torah repeats that God placed man in the Garden of Eden, commanding him not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, lest he die. It is only in verses 10-14 that the Torah interrupts the narrative for no apparent reason, giving a detailed description of the river and its tributaries. By planting the Tree of Knowledge, however, God was creating the possibility that man could sin and be evicted from Eden.
96. *Cf.* Malbim on Genesis 2:10.
97. See Part I, Chapter 3, "The Chariot and the Cherubs."
98. This strongly suggests that part of Ezekiel's vision involved meditating on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This is an extremely powerful technique for moving from a verbal (*Binah*) mode of consciousness to a non-verbal (*Chokhmah*) mode (see Part I, Chapter 11, note 96). When we remember that such a technique was used to set up a mystical Chariot (*Merkavah*) and to form the mental image of a *Golem* or Angel (*Cherub*), this particular permutation of letters becomes all the more significant (see above, notes 7 and 69). The word *Barukh*-Blessed in general refers to drawing God's presence down into the world, i.e. maximizing our ability to experience the Divine in our lives; *Zohar* 2:242a, 3:271a; *Tikuney Zohar* 18 (37a), 70 (120b); *Pardes Rimonim* 23:2, *s.v. Barukh*; *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:5.

99. *Zohar* 2:40a, 2:62a, 3:226b. See *Tikuney Zohar*, Introduction (12b), where *Mar'ot* is said to be spelled with a *Vav*. There is no contradiction, however, because even with a *Vav* the letters of *Mar'ot* can be rearranged to spell *Or Met* (אור מת), literally "dead light," indicating the same idea, namely, that the light of prophecy was dying, coming to an end. See also *Zohar* 1:12b on Genesis 1:14-15 where the word *Me'orot*-Lights is spelled both without and with a *Vav*. In the latter case, the *Zohar* says that the letters of *Me'orot* (מאורות or מאורת) spell *Or Mavet* (אור מות) or *Or Met* (אור מת). Specifically, when the word *Or* (אור) is removed from *Me'orot* (מאורות), the remaining letters spell *Mavet* (מות). The net effect of these permutations is that both Genesis and Ezekiel are concerned with different aspects of the same phenomenon, namely, the exile of the *Shekhinah* and a subsequent diminishing of God's light in the world; *cf. Bereshith Rabbah* 6:3 on Numbers 28:15.
100. In general, none of the names of God refer to the Creator Himself. The Creator is only referred to as *Ain Sof*, which means Infinite Being, or simply, the Infinite. The names used in scripture and elsewhere merely refer to the various ways through which God manifests in creation. See Part I, Chapter 11, notes 58 and 59.
101. *Mekhilta* on Exodus 15:2; *Sifra* on Leviticus 18:2; *Bereshith Rabbah* 33:3, 73:3 *Midrash Tehillim* 47:2; *Pesikta* 22 (151b); Rashi on Genesis 1:1, Hoseah 14:2.
102. Both of these words add up to 86 in the following manner:
HaTeva: ה = 5, ט = 9, ב = 2, ע = 70.
Elohim: א = 1, ל = 30, ה = 5, י = 10, ם = 40
103. *Cf.* Ramchal, *Da'at Tevunot* (Bnei Brak, 1975), p. 8*f.* See Part I, Chapter 5, note 21.
104. *Cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 1:61; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth HaShem* 1:40b, *Mesekhta Shavuot* 2:100a; *Nefesh HaChaim* 2:2 (end). See Part I, Chapter 2, notes 14 and 15.
105. The *Sefirah* of *Binah* is also specifically associated with the Divine Name *Elohim; Sha'arey Orah* 8 (80a *f.*).
106. *Zohar* 2:81a, 2:131a, 2:203a, 3:227a, 3:227b; *Tikuney Zohar* 19 (36a); *Pardes Rimonim* 25:7; *Sha'arey Orah* 5 (p. 50b); *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6.
107. *Zohar* 1:5b, 1:80a, 2:24a, 2:24b; *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 3:10. See *Sha'arey Kedushah* 1:2. See also Part I, Chapter 12, note 46.
108. *Sefer Yetzirah* 3:4. *Cf. Kuzari* 4:25 (58a, b).
109. Dust is therefore not a basic element, but a confluence of the other three; *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:30; Ramban on Genesis 1:2 (Jerusalem, 1987) p. 14, note 80; Pardes Rimonim 9:3.
110. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:13. *Cf. Tikuney Zohar* 22 (68b), 69 (107a).
111. *Sha'arey Kedushah* 1:2.
112. This is likened to the process of kneading dough with water; *Yerushalmi, Shabbath* 2:6 (20a); *Bereshith Rabbah* 14:1; *Shemoth Rabbah* 30:13.
113. *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer* 34; *Zohar* 1:113a, 1:116a; *Avodath HaKodesh* 40 (54b). See Part I, Chapter 10, note 34.
114. *Sanhedrin* 46b; *Yerushalmi, Nazir* 7:1; Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, positive commandment no.231. *Cf.* Deuteronomy 21:23.
115. *Gesher HaChaim* 2:13 (p. 117*f.*); *cf. Zohar* 3:177a. Similar to the original

creation of man's body, the resurrection will again involve a combination of water and dust; *Yerushalmi, Berakhoth* 5:2 (38b), *Taanit* 1:1 (2a); see above, note 112. According to the opinion of R. Eleazer in the *Zohar*, in order for the *Tarvad shel Rakav* or *Luz* bone to germinate in the earth (like yeast in dough), it must first be dissolved in and activated by the "Dew of Resurrection." Until then, it lies completely dormant; *Zohar* 2:28b on Isaiah 26:19.

116. See above, note 106.
117. Abarbanel on Ezekiel 1:4.
118. *Yad, Yesodey HaTorah* 7:4; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:45. *Cf.* 1 Samuel 10:5, 2 Kings 3:15, 1 Chronicles 25:1; *Livnat HaSapir*, quoted in *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek HaTakhlit* 10 (68b). Music shares the same spiritual source as prophecy; *Zohar* 3:223b; *Zohar Chadash* 26d, 48a; *Likutey Moharan* 3. It therefore has the power to cut away and penetrate all the barriers that prevent prophecy; *Sha'arey Orah* 1 (4a); *cf.* Isaiah 18:5; Rashi on Exodus 15:2, Isaiah 25:5; Radak, *Sherashim, s.v. Zamar.*
119. *Sha'arey Kedushah* 4:2 (Jerusalem, 1988) p. 5.
120. *Zohar* 3:227b.
121. Radak, *Sherashim, s.v. Tzafan.*
122. See Part I, Chapter 4, note 32.
123. *Ibid.*, note 50; Chapter 11, notes 105 and 106.
124. *Cf. Mevo Shearim* 1:1:1 (p. 2, end); *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 25.
125. This is similar to the Kabbalistic concept of *hamtakat hadin*, "sweetening the severity" of Divine judgment by reconnecting it to its source; *Zohar* 1:45b, 2:223b, 3:15a; *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Kaddish*, p. 99; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Ekev* (180c); *Ben Porath Yosef* 42d; *Keter Shem Tov* 33.
126. *Zohar* 2:52b; Ramban, R. Bachya, on Exodus 13:16, 14:31, 15:6. *Cf. Menachoth* 36b.
127. *Zohar* 1:23a, 1:26b, 3:179a.
128. Ralbag, Seforno, Hirsch, on Exodus 9:23-24.
129. Ramban, *Torath HaAdam, Sha'ar HaGemul*, p. 286; *Ikkarim* 4:33; *Nishmath Chaim* 1:13.
130. *Etz Chaim* 50:4 (p. 399). *Cf. Chagigah* 13b; *Pirkey Hekhalot* 8:3; *Torath HaAdam, ibid.*
131. *Moreh Nevukhim* 2:30. See also Ramban on Genesis 1:2 (Jerusalem, 1987) p. 14, notes 81 and 82. *Cf. Zohar* 1:12a, bottom.
132. See Part I, Chapter 13, notes 7 and 8.
133. *Devarim Rabbah* 3:12; Rashi on Deuteronomy 33:2; *Yerushalmi, Shekalim* 6:1 end (in *Bavli*, 16b); *Zohar* 2:84b, 2:226b, 3:132a, 3:154b.
134. R. Isaac of Acco, *Otzar HaChaim*, pp. 107a *ff.*
135. *Nedarim* 8b.
136. *Tzafenath Pa'aneach, BeShalach* 59d, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 81; *Keter Shem Tov* 108.
137. *Cf.* Rashi on Ezekiel 1:4.
138. *Chagigah* 13b, top. *Cf. Zohar* 2:81b, 3:228a; *Tikuney Zohar* 19 (28b); *Sha'ar HaHakdamot, Erkhey HaKinuyim, Kaf* (p. 220). See *Or HaSekhel* 4:2 (48b); *Keter Shem Tov* 28.
139. *Etz Chaim* 42:1 (p. 298).
140. *Mekhilta, Yalkuth Shimoni* (300), Rashi, Ibn Ezra, *Kli Yakar*, on Exodus

20:15; *Zohar* 2:81a, b. Also see Genesis 27:27; *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:46; Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes 11:7.

141. *Zohar* 2:31a, top.
142. *Imrey Tzadikim* 64, quoted in *Torath HaMagid* II (Bnei Brak, 1976) p. 177; *Likutim Yekarim* 17. According to others this is attributed directly to the Baal Shem Tov; *Keter Shem Tov* 237. See Steinman, *Be'er HaChasidut* (*Sefer HaBesht*) p. 106, *s.v. Chanokh LaNa'ar. Cf.* Rashi on Psalms 48:15.
143. See Part I, Chapter 4, note 31.
144. The analogy between prophecy and rain is most graphically described in God's words to Isaiah (55:9-11): "As the heaven is higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts [higher] than your thoughts. But as the rain and snow descend from heaven and return not there without watering the earth, making it bloom and bud... so the word that emanates from My mouth shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing that which I please and succeeding in its mission."
145. *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 52.
146. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 51.
147. See Part I, Chapter 10, note 47.
148. *Tikuney Zohar* 26 (71a), 60 (93a).
149. *Zohar* 1:4a. *Cf. Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, VaYerah* 17a.
150. *Cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 3:26.
151. *Kalach Pitchey Chokhmah* 2. See Part I, Chapter 10, note 82.
152. *Cf. Emet VeEmunah*, p. 97.
153. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:36. *Cf.* Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Malbim, on Leviticus 26:21; *Ya'aroth Devash* 1:10 (Lemberg, 1863) p. 72, *s.v. Aval; Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 7. See also *Etz Chaim* 49:3 (p. 383).
154. *Cf. Tomer Devorah* 1, *s.v. Mi El KaMokha.*
155. *Shemoth Rabbah* 41:1 on Ezekiel 16:19. *Cf. Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:12; Rashi, *Shabbath* 88b, *s.v. MeZaneh BeTokh Chupatah*; Rashi on Song of Songs 1:12. See also *Berakhoth* 32a.
156. *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Bereshith* (8c). See *Keter Shem Tov* 85; *Ben Porath Yosef* 111a; *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, VaYelekh* 7.
157. *Da'at Tevunot* (Bnei Brak, 1975) pp. 26, 185.
158. *Adir BaMarom* (Jerusalem, 1961) pp. 7b *f.*
159. *Ibid.* See also *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaAmidah* 19 (volume I, p. 244) *s.v. BeBirkhat Teka*; *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* 8:3, 8:12; *Likutey Halakhoth, Chol HaMoed* 4, *Birkhat HaReach* 4:1-2.
160. *Succah* 52a; *Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, Kedoshim* (98d); *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Bereshith* 149; *Keter Shem Tov* 128. *Cf. Toledoth Yaacov Yosef, BeHar* (120c), *BeChukotai* (126d); *Cf. Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth David* (1:30b-33a). See Part I, Chapter 10, note 60.
161. *Zohar* 2:163a. See Part I, Chapter 10, note 39.
162. See Part I, Chapter 2, note 38.
163. "The evil in evil will be destroyed;" *Leshem Sh'vo VeAchlamah, Drushey Olam HaTohu* 2:4:4 (p. 41). *Cf.* HaGra on *Sifra DeTzeniuta* 1 (pp. 12a, b) *s.v. Chad L'Elef Yomin.*
164. *Etz Chaim* 41:2 (p. 293), 49:3 (p. 382), 50:2 (p. 394); *Mevo Shearim* 3:2:14 (p. 148*f.*). *Cf. Zohar* 3:227a; *Tanya* 1:1 (6a); *Likutey Moharan* 19:5.
165. *Etz Chaim* 26:2 (p. 51), 41:1 (p. 291), 50:6 (p. 401*f.*); *Mevo Shearim* 6:2:3

(pp. 292-293); *Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Levishath Begadim* (pp. 12-13); *Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaTefillah* 3 (p. 19). *Cf. Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:6; *Pardes Rimonim* 23:8, *s.v. Chashmal*; *Likutey Moharan* 19:3, 41, 82; *Sichot HaRan* 93.

166. *Etz Chaim, ibid.*; *Likutey Moharan* 127.
167. See Part I, Chapter 13, note 10.
168. *Etz Chaim* 49:5 (p. 387).
169. *Ibid. Cf. Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri), *Ekev* p. 271*ff.*; *Keter Shem Tov* 53, 194, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Ekev* 2.
170. *Berakhoth* 35a, b; *Bava Kama* 94a; *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 196:1, *Turey Zahav ad. loc.*
171. *Succah* 29b, 30a.
172. *Midrash Tehillim* 146:7.
173. *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:5.
174. See above, note 163.
175. *Berakhoth* 17a.
176. *Cf. Sha'arey Kedushah*, Introduction; *Etz Chaim* 50:2; *Tanya* 2 (6b).
177. *Torath HaAdam, Sha'ar HaGemul* (in *Kitvey Ramban*) p. 307; *Derekh HaShem* 1:3:13; *Sefer HaKellalim, Kellalim Rishonim* 9.
178. *Chagigah* 13b, top. See above, note 138.
179. Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael* 1, 2, 17, 40; *cf. Sefer Yetzirah* 4:3. See Part I, Chapter 4, note 37.
180. The fact that one night's supply of oil continued to burn for a total of eight days was a miracle that transcended the laws of nature. In addition, oil is *shemen* in Hebrew, and is etymologically related to *shemini*, "eighth." It is thus taught that the concept of eight (*shemini*) transcends the physical world just as oil (*shemen*) floats above water. This is one reason that Chanukah is an eight-day festival.
181. *Cf.* Genesis 17:12, Exodus 12:49, Leviticus 12:3.
182. Maharal, *ibid. Cf. Vayikra Rabbah* 27:10; *Derekh Mitzvotekha* 9b.
183. *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:49; *Kuzari* 1:115 (76a); Ramban on Genesis 17:6; *Tur, Yoreh Deah* 260; *Chinukh* 2; Seforno, Abarbanel, on Genesis 17:11. See below, note 222.
184. *Zohar Chadash* 74d; *Likutey Moharan* 52. Also see *Niddah* 13b; *Chagigah* 12b; *Akedath Yitzchak* 6; *Nishmath Chaim* 2:16; *Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 240:1, *s.v. U'LeKayem Mitzvat Bor'o.*
185. Abudarham, p. 355; Maharsha, *Menachoth* 43b, *s.v. KeSheNizkar.*
186. These seven commandments are: 1. Not to worship idols. 2. Not to blaspheme God. 3. To establish courts of justice. 4. Not to murder. 5. Not to commit adultery or incest. 6. Not to steal. 7. Not to eat flesh from a living animal; *Sanhedrin* 56b; *Tosefta, Avodah Zarah* 9:4; *Bereshith Rabbah* 16:9; *Devarim Rabbah* 2:17; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:16; *Pesikta* 12 (100b); *Zohar* 1:35b; *Yad, Melakhim* 9:1; *Moreh Nevukhim* 1:2; *Kuzari* 3:73 (75b).
187. Of these commandments, the first six were given to Adam and Eve. The seventh would have been redundant for them, since the eating of all animal flesh was forbidden until the generation of Noach, following the Great Flood; Genesis 1:29, 9:4; *Sanhedrin* 59b; *Bereshith Rabbah* 34:18; *Etz Yosef* (on *Ain Yaacov*), *Sanhedrin* 100. *Cf. Avodah Zarah* 64b.
188. These commandments were also given so that all humans could partake of

God's good by obeying them. It is thus taught that non-Israelites who obey these seven commandments have a portion in the World to Come; *Sanhedrin* 105a; *Tosefta*, *Sanhedrin* 13:1; *Midrash Tehillim* 9:15; *Yad*, *Teshuvah* 3:5 (end), *Eduth* 11:10, *Melakhim* 8:11; Rambam on *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 10:2.

189. Thus, the prohibitions against idolatry and blasphemy taught man to worship and respect God as the Supreme Being, this being the foundation of all ethics. This was further strengthened by the commandments forbidding murder, incest/adultery and robbery, as well as the one requiring the administration of justice. Finally, the prohibition against eating flesh from a living animal teaches man kindness toward lower creatures as well as control of his base appetites; *cf. Moreh Nevukhim* 3:48. See Ramban, *Torath HaShem Temimah*, p. 173.
190. *Cf.* Leviticus 23:26.
191. *Succah* 55b.
192. *Ibid.*
193. *Sichot HaRan* 86. This is related to the concept of "the superior below and the inferior above." *Pesachim* 50a; *Bava Bathra* 10b; *Sichot HaRan* 40. *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 10:6, 32. See Part I, Chapter 3, note 63.
194. *Cf. Sichot HaRan* 27, 79.
195. *Cf. Psalms* 118:10-12.
196. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:3, 6:4.
197. *Tanchuma*, *Lekh Lekha* 20 (in Buber, 27); *Targum Yonathan*, Rashi, on Genesis 17:3; Alshekh on Genesis 12:1 (p. 36b, end.).
198. See Part I, Chapter 4, note 36.
199. *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*, p. 94*f. Cf.* Genesis 2:7, Numbers 11:17, 1 Samuel 10:6, Isaiah 32:15, Joel 3:1. See also Hirsch on Genesis 12:7, Leviticus 1:1.
200. Ezekiel 2:2.
201. *Etz Chaim* 41:1 (p. 291*ff.*). *Cf. Likutey Moharan* 82.
202. *Keter Shem Tov* 207; *Magid Devarav LeYaacov* 232; *cf. Sichot HaRan* 72.
203. See above, note 72. See also *Sha'arey Orah* 2 (Warsaw, 1883) p. 31b; *Reshith Chokhmah*, *Sha'ar HaYirah* 4 (16c).
204. See *Menachoth* 44a; *Sifri* (113) on Numbers 15:41; Alshekh, *ad. loc.*
205. *Bereshith Rabbah* 9:7; *Yoma* 69b; *Sanhedrin* 64a.
206. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 44.
207. *Pardes Rimonim* 25:1; *Mevo Shearim* 2:2:2 (p. 28); *Ben Porath Yosef* 126d, quoted in *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, *Yithro* 10; *Hekhal HaBerakhah*, *BeChukotai* (300b), *VaYeshev* (27d).
208. *Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby*, p. 46. See *Pardes Rimonim* 7:4; 27:19; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith*, *Beth Yisrael* (1:29b *f.*). See also *Ta'amey HaMitzvot* (HaAri) *Lekh Lekha*, *Sod Mitzvat Milah* (p. 52*ff.*); *Zohar* 1:3a, *Derekh Emet ad. loc.*, *s.v. Tzinor HaMotarot. Cf. Bekhoroth* 44b, *Yevamoth* 75b.
209. *Zohar* 3:252a; *Likutey Moharan* 5:4; *Likutey Halakhoth*, *Choshen Mishpat*, *Nezikin* 4:4-5.
210. *Ibid.*
211. In general, the duct coming up from the testes now meets and converges with the duct leaving the bladder at a point inside the body (as they both pass through the prostate gland). It is at this point that a functional valve allows either semen or urine to flow through a single channel (urethra) which then leaves the body and extends through the entire length of the male

organ; *Bekhoroth* 44b; *Yevamoth* 75b; *Mishnah Mikvaoth* 8:4; *Rambam ad.loc.*; *Chazon Ish, Even HaEzer, P'ru U'Rvu* 12:7 (pp. 23b-24a); *She'eloth U'Teshuvoth Yeshuoth Malko, Even HaEzer* 18; *Tzitz Eliezer*, volume 10, 25:24:4; *Cheshev HaEphod* 2:8; *Nishmath Abraham, Even HaEzer, P'ru U'Rvu* 5:3 (p. 39*f.*).

212. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 23. See also *Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri) *Acharey Mot* (p. 222), *Ekev* (p. 272).
213. See Genesis 2:17; Abarbanel *ad. loc.*; *Bereshith Rabbah* 16:6; *Avodah Zarah* 5a; *Avodath HaKodesh, Chelek HaAvodah* 21 (p. 41d).
214. See Part I, Chapter 10, notes 72-74.
215. See above, notes 92 and 96.
216. *Sha'ar HaMitzvot, Ekev* (p. 99); *Sha'ar HaPesukim, Bereshith* (p. 13 top).
217. See Part I, Chapter 11, note 26.
218. *Sha'ar HaMitzvot, ibid. Cf. Likutey Halakhoth, Milah* 2:2 (p. 77b).
219. See above, note 184. Also see *Likutey Halakhoth, Yoreh Deah, Hekhsher Kelim* 4:32, *Giluach* 4:13, *Niddah* 2:7, *Kibud Av V'Em* 2:1.
220. *Ibid.*
221. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 30.
222. *Beth Yosef, Bayit Chadash*, on *Tur, Yoreh Deah* 260. *Cf. Likutey Halakhoth, Tefillin* 7:7. See Part I, Chapter 8, note 16.
223. *Cf.* Exodus 21:10; Rashi *ad. loc.*; *Niddah* 31b.
224. *Cf. Yerushalmi, Sotah* 1:5 (6a); *Jereshith Rabbah* 26:10; *Vayikra Rabbah* 23:9; *Tanchuma, Bereshith* 12: Rashi on Genesis 6:13.
225. See above, note 212.
226. *Etz Chaim* 49:2 (p. 381 top).
227. Genesis 3:23-24. See below, note 242.
228. *Likutey Torah* (HaAri) *Bereshith*, p. 4*f.* on Genesis 2:15.
229. *Avoth* 3:11; *Sanhedrin* 99a.
230. *Bereshith Rabbah* 48:8; *Eruvin* 19a.
231. One of the important commandments that God gave Israel was to build a Sanctuary (*Mikdash*). The Torah thus says, "They shall make Me a Sanctuary (*Mikdash*) that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). When Israel was in the desert, this Sanctuary took the form of the prefabricated Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) that was carried with them on their journeys. When they finally settled in the Promised Land, it was built as the Holy Temple (*Beth HaMikdash*) in Jerusalem. The Tabernacle and the Temple were to be like a miniature Garden of Eden, devoted totally to the service of God, where everything pertaining to man's fallen state would be excluded. See *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:2; *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 5:1; *Pesikta Rabbatai* 5 (18b).
232. *Yad, Tumat Okhlin* 16:8; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:47; *Kuzari* 3:49 (55a). *Cf.* Numbers 19:20; Rashi on Numbers 19:13; *Shavuoth* 16b; *Sifra*, Rashi, on Leviticus 17:16; *Yad, Biyat HaMikdash* 3:12.
233. *Cf.* Leviticus 18:29; *Kerithoth* 2b; *Yad, Isurey Biah* 1:1; *Sefer HaMitzvot*, negative commandment no.352.
234. See note 231.
235. *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth Acharon* (1:22a), *s.v. VeAtem.*
236. *Cf.* Genesis 17:14; Leviticus 11:44; Numbers 19:20; *Sha'arey Kedushah* 3:5; *Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Sha'ar HaOtiot, Taharah* (1:108a).

237. *Cf. Zohar* 1:236b.
238. See Part I, Chapter 3, "Chayot — The Angels of Yetzirah."
239. See Part I, Chapter 1, note 12; Chapter 3, note 54.
240. *Pardes Rimonim* 23:16, *s.v. Etz; Sh'nei Luchot HaB'rith, Beth Yisrael* (1:13a), *s.v. Harey. Cf. Bahir* 95; *Zohar* 2:58b, 2:64b.
241. This is the level of God's Glory that initiates everything transmitted in a prophetic vision; *Derekh HaShem* 3:3:6. See Part I, Chapter 3, note 39.
242. The *Cherubim* are therefore seen as the angels of *Gehinnom*, through which one must pass before entering Paradise; *Targum Yonathan*, R. Bachya, on Genesis 3:24; *Zohar* 2:266b. The Torah is also referred to as a "Tree of Life" (Proverbs 3:18). This alludes to the fact that the mystery of prophecy is contained in the teachings of the Torah. It is for this reason that the *Cherubim* were placed on the Ark that contained the original Torah Scroll written by Moses. By concentrating on the space between these figures, the prophet could then obtain a vision and hear God's voice.
243. *Likutey Torah* (HaAri) *Bereshith*, p. 4 on Genesis 2:8; *Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri) *Bereshith*, p. 25.
244. *Cf. Meshekh Chokhmah, Lekh Lekha* on Genesis 12:7.
245. According to the Kabbalists, the Tree of Knowledge, the Serpent and Adam's *Yesod* were different aspects of the *Klipat Nogah* that would have become completely permitted at the onset of the Sabbath; *Etz Chaim* 49:3 (p. 382); *Leshem Sh'vo VeAchlamah, Drushey Olam HaTohu* 2:4:2 (p. 39a), 2:4:4 (p. 40b).
246. *Cf. Zohar* 3:261b on Genesis 3:7. *See also Sefer HaLikutim* (HaAri) *Bereshith*, p. 25.
247. Radak, *Sherashim, s.v. Cherev.*
248. Ibn Ezra, Ralbag, Hirsch, on Exodus 7:11.
249. *Sanhedrin* 67b, Rashi *ad. loc., s.v. Zeh Ma'aseh Shedim*; Radak, *Sherashim, s.v. Lahat.*
250. Exodus 7:11, 7:22, 8:3, 8:14.
251. *Sefer HaTzeruf*, pp. 1-3.
252. *Ibid.*, p. 3a. *Cf. Bahir* 1.
253. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:8. See *Otzar Eden HaGanuz*, p. 9a.
254. Radak, Abarbanel, on Ezekiel 1:28, from *Devarim Rabbah* 7:8. See *Chagigah* 13b; *Moreh Nevukhim* 3:6.
255. *Succah* 5b; *Chagigah* 13b. *Cf.* Malbim on Ezekiel 10:15.
256. Ibn Ezra, Ramban, R. Bachya, on Numbers 2:2.
257. Genesis 30:14; Ibn Ezra, Ramban *ad. loc.*
258. *Cf. Zohar* 2:14b.
259. Ramchal, *Ma'amar HaIkkarim, BaRuchanim.*
260. *Likutey Moharan* 9.
261. Ramban *ad. loc.*; *Pesachim* 113b; *Yad, Avodah Zarah* 11:16; *Tur-Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh Deah* 179:1. See *Likutey Halakhoth, Taanit* 4:21.
262. *Derekh HaShem* 1:5:4.
263. *Peliyah* 14a; *Pardes Rimonim* 21:14; *Shoshan Yesod Olam* 126; *Sheirit Yosef* 12a; *Chayay Olam HaBa* 23b, *Mafteach HaShemot* 62a; *Otzar HaChaim* 201b; R. Shalom Sharabi, *Or HaLevanah* (Jerusalem, 1925) p. 86; *Siddur R. Shabatai* 2:97a, b; *Siddur R. Asher*, p. 282; *Shefa Tal* 8:3 (p. 142b); *Etz Chaim* 44:5.

264. Although four letters can normally be permuted 24 different ways, since there are two letters *Heh*, this number is halved; HaGra on *Sefer Yetzirah* 5:1. *Cf. Bahir* 107.
265. *Etz Chaim* 40:15 (p. 288), 43:2 (p. 322). *Cf. Sha'ar Ma'amarey Rashby* on *Perek Shirah* (p. 299); Abarbanel on Deuteronomy 18:14; R. Bachya or Genesis 28:12.
266. See above, notes 77-79.

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לעילוי נשמת
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Raymond Sutton
נפטר כ״א שבט תשל״ד

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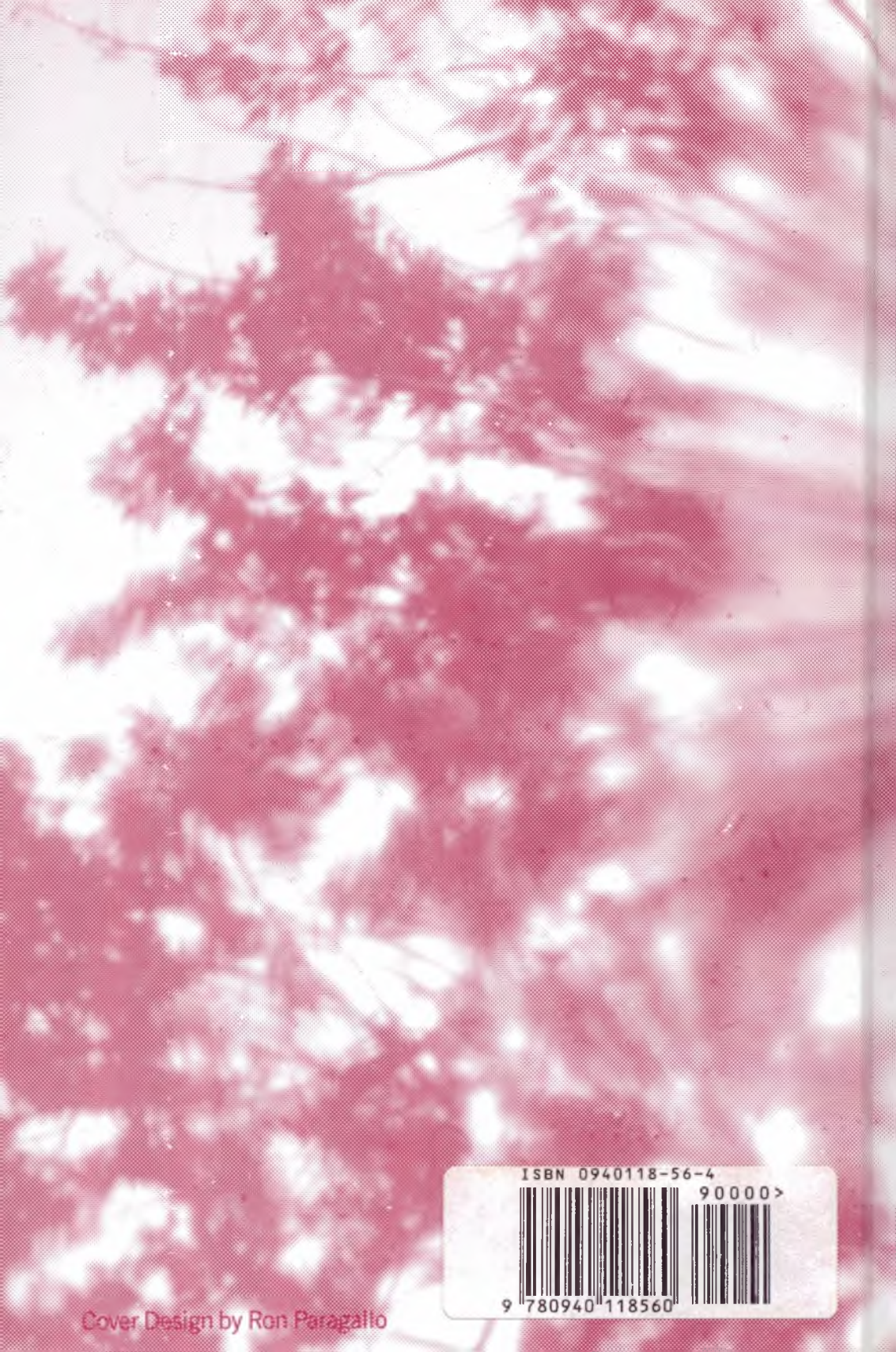

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